

November 20, 1996
COLUMBIA
Final full moon
rather Christmas

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Christmas this year is celebrated for the first time this century on the full moon night, the first of India's Christmas. The full moon will be in 2013, according to the Hindu calendar.

Women caught smuggling heroin embedded in their dresses

EDDAH (AP) — A Pakistani woman caught smuggling heroin embedded in her dress was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The woman, who was caught with 1.5 kilograms of heroin, was sentenced to 10 years in prison. The woman, who was caught with 1.5 kilograms of heroin, was sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Picasso exhibited in China

BEIJING (AFP) — A wealthy German art collector has left four Spanish paintings in China for the first time. The paintings, which are by Pablo Picasso, are being exhibited in China for the first time.

Indian drivers acquiring manners

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Police officers in New Delhi are reportedly acquiring manners from Indian drivers. The police officers are reportedly acquiring manners from Indian drivers.

Experts find platinum, gold in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Experts have found platinum ore for the first time in several locations south of the desert in Egypt and located new sites for the production of gold, the government daily Al Akhbar reported Wednesday. The newspaper, quoting the head of the state-run Egyptian Geological Survey, said a team of German experts made this unprecedented platinum find which "stipulates a promising future for the production of precious metals in Egypt."

Volume 21 Number 6384

King visits GHQ

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Wednesday called at the General Headquarters of the Armed Forces and discussed with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai, issues of concern to the Armed Forces.

King congratulates House speaker

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday phoned Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Sour congratulating him on his reelection as speaker on Tuesday. The King stressed the need to finalise draft laws and the need of cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities.

Crown Prince meets U.N. World Bank officials

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan received at the Royal Court on Wednesday the resident representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Jorgen Lessner who presented the Crown Prince on the 1996 human development report. Mr. Lessner said that the report includes several concepts since the early 80s focusing on issues related to health, education and national income. The Crown Prince also received Director of the Middle East Department at the World Bank Under Secretary General and discussed with him the World Bank's proposals for human resource development in Jordan. Prince Hassan called for increased World Bank focus on the Kingdom's agricultural sector pointing out the importance of the sector. Attending the audience was Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf.

Ajloun presents requests to PM

AMMAN (Petra) — Heads of tribes, municipal and village councils and representatives of various organisations in Ajloun governorate on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and presented requests for improvement of services to the public. They also requested that His Majesty King Hussein visit their governorate that they can express their allegiance to the Hashemite Throne. Mr. Kabariti promised that the government will do everything possible to meet their demands.

Turkey, Jordan to sign defence deal

ANKARA (AP) — The defence minister on Wednesday said Turkey and Jordan will sign defence cooperation agreements in the coming days, without elaborating. "Negotiations are underway," Turkish Tayan, the defence minister, told a news conference. "Once completed, we will have a beneficial cooperation deal," Mr. Tayan did not disclose the details of the talks but said training of Jordanian pilots on Turkish-produced F-16 jets could possibly be part of the deal. Turkey has been manufacturing F-16s under U.S. licence.

Jordan relected to U.N. inspection unit

NEW YORK (Petra) — Jordan was Wednesday reelected to the United Nations joint inspection unit to represent Asia in the panel alongside Japan. Jordan will be represented on the 11-member unit by Khalil Othman of the Foreign Ministry. Jordan was first elected in 1993 to the panel, whose duties entail inspecting and monitoring the performance of various U.N. agencies and organisations.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز مؤسسة صحفية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الرأسي

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21-22, 1996, RAJAB 10-11, 1417

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Arafat demands changes in Paris pact with Israel

PARIS (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, accusing Israel of violating its 1994 economic agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), demanded on Wednesday that it be rewritten.

Mr. Arafat told a Paris World Bank donors' meeting on the West Bank and Gaza that the autonomous Palestinian areas were losing \$7 million a day because of Israel's decision to close them off last February after bomb attacks by militants.

"The peace process is at a crossroads and I fear that it may even go into reverse, to the benefit of tensions and instability," he said.

"The unjust siege threatens the peace process and raises a shadow over the hopes and ambitions of the Palestinian people," he added.

Output was down this year by 20 per cent compared to the past two years, the agriculture sector was "disastrously" hit, unemployment had jumped to a "dangerous" rate of 63 per cent and investment projects were down.

The economic agreement signed with Israel in Paris, Mr. Arafat said, was based on two principles — a Palestinian workforce in Israel that was 90,000 strong in 1993, and freedom of movement for individuals and goods to and from Gaza and the West Bank.

"For the last 30 months, Israel has violated this accord through deliberate methods, procedural devices and decisions that strip the accord of its meaning, form and content."

"That is why we demand that the accord be rewritten in line with our joint commitments which provide for the right to revise the accord since May 4, 1995, something which Israel has always evaded," Mr. Arafat said.

He urged a revised accord which would force Israel to lift restrictions and quotas on direct imports by the Palestinians, transfer sales tax revenue collected by the Israeli treasury and recognise Palestinian technical standards.

In a drive to boost aid for the West Bank and Gaza, Mr. Arafat outlined an \$845-million investment programme for 1997 which he said aimed to consolidate essential infrastructure, encourage investment in the social sector, create jobs and strengthen the private sector.

The bank's consultative group has so far pledged some \$2.9 billion in assistance to the areas for 1994-1995.

Donors pledge \$845m for PNA

DONOR COUNTRIES pledged \$845 million in investment next year for the Palestinian autonomous territories at a conference here Wednesday, World Bank President James Wolfensohn said.

98, but Palestinian leaders are keen to ensure that pledges are fulfilled.

The World Bank says the political situation has resulted in projections of a five per cent decline of gross domestic product (GDP) for 1996 in the autonomous Palestinian areas.

A main hope for improvement is the expected opening in about two months of the Al Muntar industrial park on the Palestinian side of the Israel-Gaza Strip border, World Bank officials said.

At best, the project will employ 17,000 people directly, mostly in textiles, and 35,000 indirectly by early 1998.

Kemal Dervis, World Bank vice-president for the Middle East and North Africa, said barring new political upheavals "there is no reason that the Palestinian economy cannot do well."

"The bad situation is due to political and security constraints as well as uncertainty in the minds of potential investors. But this is not a situation that is so bad it cannot work. Things can and do advance," he said.

Mr. Arafat also said there had been no progress in negotiations on Israeli troop redeployment from Hebron.

Speaking after a meeting with French Prime Minister Alain Juppe, Mr. Arafat said: "I am sorry to say that in spite of intensive talks, we have accomplished nothing."

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said in London he hoped the Jewish state would soon reach an agreement with the Palestinians on the Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

Speaking at a press conference after talks with British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, Mr. Mordechai said: "Our government will continue the peace process. I hope in a very short time we will have an agreement on Hebron. Then we can continue with other problems."

Mr. Rifkind said he too hoped for a quick agreement on Hebron, saying it was blocking other progress in the peace process.

King, Queen launch municipal projects and open new Palace of Justice building

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor on Wednesday inaugurated a number of development projects within the Amman area in the course of the country's celebrations of the King's 61st birthday.

The King and Queen first attended a ceremony marking the start of the digging of the Wadi Haddadeh tunnel which links the Wadi Haddadeh district with the centre of Amman and unveiled a commemorative plaque installed at the site.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi briefed the King and Queen on the project which he said is aimed at easing traffic congestion in the Amman area.

The 188-metre long two-lane tunnel which will take 350 days to be completed is expected to cost JD 3,493,176, the mayor said.

The King and Queen visited the site of the first stage of the Amman municipal complex at Ras Al 'Ain district and unveiled a plaque at the building. They also laid the foundation stone for a new building to house the municipal offices.

Dr. Abbadi told the King and Queen that the premises would house a town hall, a mosque, a cultural centre, a public library, a national museum, and other utilities. He said that the complex will be surrounded by a public garden and a parking lot.

According to Dr. Abbadi, the first stage of the project entails a four-storey building

with the ground floor serving as multipurpose halls and an auditorium seating 130 people with an adjacent restaurant.

The upper floors will house administration offices.

Dr. Abbadi said that cultural facilities at the premises are designed to boost the country's artistic and cultural movement in Jordan noting that the first phase of the project, which cost JD 2.5 million, took 15 months to complete.

Later the King and Queen formally inaugurated Jordan Hospital and unveiled a commemorative plaque at the entrance of the building. Hospital board chairman Abdullah Al Bashir briefed the King and Queen on the hospital's sections and services and presented the King with the hospital shield on this occasion.

According to Dr. Bashir, the 220-bed hospital which cost JD20 million is fully equipped to offer specialised medical services by a staff of 30 specialists. The hospital had started operations last February.

The King and Queen also inaugurated the Palace of Justice at Abdali district and conferred on Justice Minister Abdul Karim Dughmi the Jordanian Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order. The King also conferred a number of medals on retired judges in recognition of their services to the nation.

The new court complex which cost JD14 million, consists of 11 court halls



His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday cuts a cake replica of the new Amman City Hall and (below) a ribbon marking the opening of a new Palace of Justice (Petra photos)



and offices for judges and other utilities. Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, and his wife, Chief of the Royal Court Awn Khasawneh and other officials accompanied the King and Queen on their tour.

World powers regret U.S. veto of Boutros Ghali

PARIS (AFP) — World powers expressed regret Wednesday at Washington's unilateral move to block the reelection of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, but the U.N. chief himself said he was powerless to overcome U.S. opposition to his candidacy.

China and Arab states criticised the U.S. decision to veto the Egyptian diplomat's reelection, while France renewed its support for Mr. Ghali and warned it could veto other candidates.

France also "has a right of veto in the Security Council and could use it," foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt said.

But Mr. Ghali, 74, stung by the single vote against him cast by U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright in the 15-member Security Council, appeared to have all but conceded defeat in his bid to secure a second five-year term, recognising that Wash-

ington's opposition will be too much to overcome.

In two newspaper interviews published Wednesday, Mr. Ghali admitted that he was powerless before U.S. intentions to stop his reelection, despite persuading the 14 other members of the Security Council that he is the best candidate for the top U.N. job.

"Friends come to me and say 'don't be passive. You are in America: they like fighters ... You have to act.' But how can I fight Goliath?" the U.N. chief told the New York Times in an interview published Wednesday.

The interview was conducted at Mr. Ghali's Sutton Place residence near U.N. headquarters in New York on Sunday, well before Ms. Albright cast the only vote in the Security Council against his reelection on Tuesday.

A U.N. spokesman, after the vote, said Mr. Ghali,

whose mandate expires on Dec. 31, had no plans to withdraw his candidacy, but in his interview with the daily, Mr. Ghali suggested his struggle would ultimately be futile.

"Come on. Who am I to fight a superpower? I cannot," he told the newspaper, adding that he was baffled as to the reason for the U.S. objection.

"Do I represent a danger to the security of the United States? No. Did I smuggle? Am I (former Panamanian dictator Manuel) Noriega or (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein?" he asked.

"I had cooperated with the Americans in so many ways," he added. "My relations were good — I would not say excellent. But politics is politics."

In a second interview with Cairo's government weekly Al-Mussawwar, also conducted before the U.S. vote, Mr. Ghali said that "personal anti-

mony" between himself and Albright could be partly to blame for her opposition to his reelection.

"Maybe Mrs. Albright has personal motives," Mr. Ghali said, adding that he could find "no logical interpretation for this attitude."

The U.S. veto capped a five-month drive by Washington to replace Mr. Ghali with a candidate more palatable to president Bill Clinton's rivals in Congress, who are withholding payment of \$1.5 billion in U.S. dues to the United Nations.

The Republicans in the U.S. Congress maintain that Mr. Ghali has failed to reform the United Nations, which they charge is unresponsive to the challenges of the post-cold war era.

But Mr. Ghali still commands widespread support, as the Security Council vote shows. China on Wednesday said

that the fact that the United States acted in isolation, "shows the overwhelming majority of states endorse Mr. Ghali."

"We regret the failure (to adopt) the relevant draft resolution and will continue to respect and support the recommendation of the organisation of African unity for Mr. Ghali's reelection," foreign ministry spokesman Cui Tiankai said.

The Arab League was more critical in its attack on the U.S. veto, saying it will harm U.S. interests in the Arab world.

"We deplore this American position which will not serve American interests in the Arab world," Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid said, recalling that the 22-member pan-Arab organisation had endorsed Mr. Ghali's candidacy for a second term.

U.S. striving to couple further moves with accord on Hebron deployment

From Lamis Andoni in Boston

ALTHOUGH THE U.S. has been pushing for an agreement to redeploy Israeli troops in Hebron, American officials hope that the delay could lead to a more comprehensive agreement that establishes a link with other steps towards the completion of the implementation of the Oslo arrangements.

According to administration officials, the U.S. is wary about the dragging talks but is hopeful that it will lead to a linkage between the redeployment and other steps that will ensure the beginning of final status talks next year.

Administration officials have, for the first time, indicated that support for

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's demand to get the Israeli government to commit itself to further steps that will guarantee the continuity of the peace process.

Officials said that an agreement over the redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron was extremely important but was not enough to place the peace process back on track.

"The agreement should not be just another agreement but a key step to advance the peace process," an American official told the Jordan Times.

For the agreement to open the way for final status talks, the source said, accords on further rede-

ployment and the opening of the Palestinian airport in Gaza should be reached.

The American position reflects concern in Washington that the stalemate between the Palestinians and Israel could totally jeopardise the whole Middle East process. Consequently while the U.S. has tacitly supported Israeli claims that Israeli settlers should remain and guaranteed safety in Hebron, it agrees with the Palestinian side that a redeployment agreement should be linked to further implementation of the Oslo accords.

Mr. Arafat, according to several sources, is aware of the American position and hence he has not felt so far the pressure to bow to the new Israeli terms to modify the Hebron agreement.

Judging by interviews with Palestinian and American officials, Mr. Arafat is using the rare "convergence of American-Palestinian interests" to extract an Israeli commitment to complete the implementation of the Oslo pacts.

Consequently when special envoy Dennis Ross met with the two sides recently, Mr. Arafat did not feel under pressure to sign as long as Israel did not commit itself to further steps that would guarantee the continuity of the peace process — that has become a top priority for the U.S. goals in the Middle East.

The American position is expected to continue regardless of who is appointed as the new secretary of state when Warren Christopher quits early next year. American officials told the Jordan Times that the American team in charge of the peace process will not change and will pursue the same policies.

The team mainly consists of Mr. Ross and his deputy Aaron Miller. They have been involved in formulating Middle East policies since the eighties. Both are top Middle East experts who have close knowledge to the region and who are perceived to favour the Israeli Labour Party to the Likud.

Mr. Miller, who worked in the American embassy in Amman in 1984 as a special political officer, is one of the State Department experts on the Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO). He reads both Hebrew and Arabic as part of doctoral degree in Middle Eastern studies.

The two men have been often referred to by diplomats and experts in Washington as the State Department's rabbis in reference to the fact that they are American Jews.

However, the two men had developed a close working relationship with Mr. Arafat whom they see as crucial to the peace process in the region.

In recent press reports Mr. Arafat was said to be upset with Mr. Ross but later denied the reports. According to sources in the American administration, Mr. Arafat's office was swift to call Mr. Ross' office to deny the reports. Mr. Ross, the sources said, is satisfied with his relationship with Mr. Arafat and the initial report did not change the working relationship between the American team and the Palestinian leader.

It is, however, unclear if Mr. Arafat agrees with the American team that the agreement regarding Hebron should be permanent — a step that will lead to the division of Hebron.

PLO officials said that Mr. Arafat has been very secretive about his contacts with Mr. Ross, but that for a change he does not feel under much pressure from the U.S. to sign an agreement if it would not lead to the full implementation of the Oslo accords.

2 Home & Middle East News

Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday, November 21-22, 1996

General Assembly votes to urge Israel to accede to NPT

NEW YORK (UNIS) — The General Assembly would call upon the only state in the Middle East not yet party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to accede to the treaty without further delay and place all unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, according to a draft resolution approved today by the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security).

The text, sponsored by Egypt on behalf of the Arab League and Malaysia, was approved by a recorded vote of 96 in favour to 2 against (Israel and the United States), with 32 abstentions.

Prior to the draft's approval as a whole, preambular paragraph 6 was approved in a separate vote by 117 in favour to two against (India, Israel), with 10 abstentions (Armenia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Nicaragua, Pakistan). That paragraph would have the assembly recall a decision of the parties to the NPT to urge universal adherence to the treaty, particularly by states that operated unsafeguarded nuclear facilities.

By the terms of a second draft concerning the Middle East, approved by the committee without a vote, the assembly would urge all parties to consider practical and urgent steps to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region. It would invite those countries to adhere to the NPT, and place all their nuclear activities under IAEA safeguards.

Prior to acting on the draft, the committee

approved an amendment submitted by Israel, that would have the assembly note the importance of the "ongoing" bilateral Middle East "peace" negotiations. The amendment was approved by a vote of 61 in favour to 28 against, with 33 abstentions.

By another draft approved without a vote, the assembly would call upon all states that had not yet done so to sign and/or ratify the convention on prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) without delay. It would stress the importance to the convention that the United States and the Russian Federation, as declared possessors of chemical weapons, be among the original state parties to the convention.

A second draft on the Chemical Weapons Convention, submitted by Iran, was withdrawn when the co-sponsors of both drafts reached agreement on language concerning the Preparatory Commission for the Organisation on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Under the terms of a draft approved by a vote of 137 in favour to two against (Israel and the United States), with one abstention (Russia), the assembly would decide, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda, to convene a special session devoted to disarmament in 1999. An exact date on its convening would be set, subject to the outcome of deliberations at the 1997 session of the Disarmament Commission.

Israeli spy agencies said to compete for 'best minds'

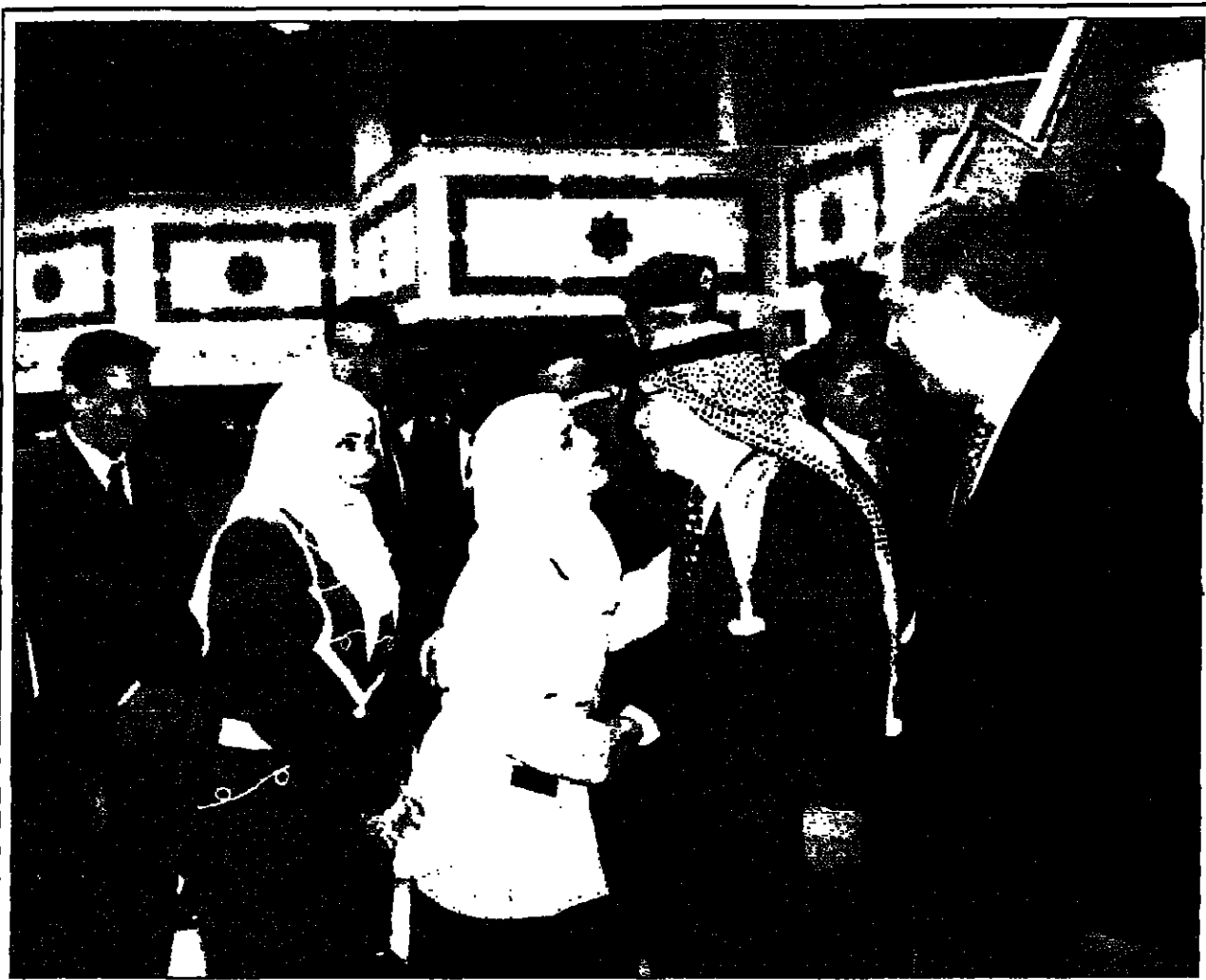
TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's intelligence services are stealing each other's "best minds" in intra-mural squabbling which has damaged cooperation between the agencies, the Israeli daily Yedioth Aharanot said Wednesday. An unnamed officer from military intelligence told a closed-door parliament committee that there was a "worrying brain drain" from his agency to Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service, the paper said.

The officer warned that Mossad was stealing away his organisation's "best minds" by enticing them with better pay and work conditions.

Security services do not exchange information and often hoard intelligence to make sure they get credit for major discoveries, the officer said.

One of the parliament sub-committee members called the officer's report "very serious and worrying," Yedioth Aharanot said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has decided to improve security cooperation by creating an "anti-terrorism commission" headed by himself and including representatives from all the security services, another official said.

But the commission has yet to be put into place, the paper said.



NEW PALACE OF JUSTICE: His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday greets citizens gathered at the new Palace of Justice building in Abdali after inaugurating the premises (Petra photo)

Death toll in Egyptian flashfloods rise to 12

CAIRO (AFP) — The death toll from torrential rain and flooding which struck southern and eastern Egypt in the past week has climbed to 12 with the death of two children, police said Wednesday.

The children died in the southeastern village of Shalatin on Tuesday and several houses collapsed in flooding. The authorities set up a camp for the homeless in a school.

"A toll provided by police on Tuesday said the bad weather had claimed 10 lives and left hundreds of people homeless.

Roads leading to Red Sea resorts such as Sharm Al Sheikh and Hurghada were cut and hotels closed with

first-floor rooms flooded. Air traffic was crippled as rain water overflowed the tarmac and dumped mud and gravel on landing strips.

Hundreds of acres of land were destroyed in the southern provinces of Aswan, Sohag and Assiut. Most of the homes which were destroyed were built illegally in valleys where rain water flowed or were made of mud bricks.

"In Upper Egypt, on the south, homes to ancient Pharaonic sites, homeowners were to receive the equivalent of \$7.3 in compensation from the authorities. Hundreds are living in tent camps set up by city officials.

GCC head briefs Bahraini leaders on shunned meeting

MANAMA (AP) — The head of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Wednesday briefed the Bahraini government on the outcome of a ministerial meeting it boycotted due to its long-running territorial dispute with Qatar.

GCC Secretary-General Jamil Al Hujailan met with the emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the prime minister and the foreign minister on the results of the two-day GCC foreign ministers' meeting in Doha, Qatar, earlier this month, the official Gulf News Agency reported.

The meeting was attended by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to set the agenda for the annual GCC summit starting Dec. 7 in Qatar. Bahrain has said it will boycott the summit.

The ministers also discussed the Iraqi situation, the Mideast peace process and terrorism, but details of their talks were not disclosed. The Bahraini-Qatar dispute involves a chain of islands, territorial water boundaries and the Zubara land strip in Qatar, where the Bahraini ruling family's ancestors lived 200 years ago.

Iran opposition to field presidential candidate

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran's token legal opposition movement intends to take part in presidential elections for the first time next year, a newspaper reported Wednesday.

Ebrahim Yazdi said the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI) he leads will nominate a candidate to run in the election set for August, the Iran News said.

Mr. Yazdi told Iran News that his group would "take part in a political party and invite the people to a massive turnout."

But he acknowledged that their candidate may not be approved by the authorities — as happened ahead of March legislative polls, when most of the LMI hopefuls were disqualified from the running. "If that happens again, we will support someone else" from another group, but "we will not boycott" the polls, pledged Mr. Yazdi, who served as foreign minister in a transitional government set up after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

He declined to name his group's candidate, saying the time was not "ripe yet." The LMI, an illegal but tolerated movement with liberal democratic views, recognises the Islamic republic in principle, but is opposed to the Islamic regime in power.

LMI politicians were sidelined shortly after the revolution when they opposed the ruling clergy's radical policies, including the seizure of

the U.S. embassy in November 1979.

It is the only opposition group so far to have announced it wants to take part in the vote.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani will have served two successive four-year terms by July and he is not allowed under the constitution to seek a new mandate.

The ruling conservative clergy has pruned Parliamentary Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri to replace him.

The only other confirmed hopeful is former intelligence minister, Mohammad Mohammadi Reyskhani, who is a hardliner. A coalition of Islamic moderates and left-wingers has yet to field its choice.

The elections will determine the direction Iran's Islamic revolution will take after President Hashemi Rafsanjani steps down.

Mr. Yazdi's group favours improving relations with foreign governments and has criticised official corruption in Iran. He is a U.S.-trained doctor. Iran has been ruled by clericalism since 1979, and there are no Western-style political parties. There are informal factions, though all members of the Majlis support fundamentalist rule to varying degrees.

The LMI boycotted parliamentary elections in March after 11 of its 15 candidates were barred from running by the Guardian Council.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Seven civilians killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Seven civilians have been slaughtered in an ambush attack by suspected extremists who have intensified their campaign of terror ahead of a referendum next week that would boost the president's powers. The victims, all employees at a ceramics factory in the Tidjebine region east of Algiers, were killed on Monday, the daily Al Khabar reported Wednesday. The killings bring to more than 120 the number of people slaughtered since the beginning of the month in attacks blamed on extremists opposed to the referendum scheduled for Nov. 28. Last month, four people had their throats slit at the Tidjebine mosque in front of hundreds of people attending Friday prayer. The Islamic Salvation Army, the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), claimed responsibility for the killings.

Kuwaiti troops, allies exercise in desert

UDAIRI RANGE, Kuwait (AFP) — Hundreds of Kuwaiti, American and British troops pounded desert targets with live rounds on Wednesday. "The coalition forces are still here. Our relationship is improving, our training is improving," Kuwaiti Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Ali Al Mumin told reporters after the display of fire power. "And hopefully he (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein) gets the message that we have a deterrent here, which he needs to take a lot into consideration." Gen. Mumin said at the Udairi desert firing range, Kuwaiti F/A-18 jet fighters staged low-level bombing runs, while British, U.S. and Kuwaiti ground forces fired live rounds from tanks, artillery and rifles at targets about 25 kilometres from the Iraqi border.

Egypt launches first population census

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt, which is facing huge population growth, has launched a nationwide population census which is expected to last a year, the president of the census bureau said in statement published Wednesday. Ihab Elwi told the government daily Al Akhbar that the census which began on Tuesday will be the first since 1986. Around 60,000 pollsters will criss-cross Egypt's 26 provinces for about one month to gather information which will be analysed over the next 11 months before the results can be known, Mr. Elwi said. He urged the population to cooperate with the census-takers. Egypt has a population of more than 60 million but this is expected to climb to 85 million in the next 20 years, according to recent statements made by President Hosni Mubarak.

Israeli sets himself alight at ministry

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli army veteran set himself on fire outside the defence ministry on Wednesday in what his daughter said was a desperate appeal for state aid to buy a car. "It was horrific — a man on fire running in the street," said an Israeli Radio reporter who witnessed the incident while passing by the ministry. "Someone came with a fire extinguisher and put out the flames... He was taken to hospital in serious condition." The radio said the man was a disabled army veteran, aged about 60, who was accompanied to the ministry in Tel Aviv by his daughter. He suddenly torched himself near the entrance while she was trying to go inside to plead his case. "He gave 34 years of his life to the army and they destroyed him. All he wanted was a car. He is handicapped," the daughter, her voice shaking, told the radio.

Sharansky postpones trip to Russia

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, a former Soviet dissident, postponed a planned trip to Russia because of the death of his brother-in-law Wednesday. Mr. Sharansky was to fly to Russia on Sunday, Nov. 24 — his first return to the country of his birth since he was released from a Soviet jail in 1986 as part of an East-West prisoner-swap. Mr. Sharansky's spokesman, Roman Polonsky, said the trip would be postponed for at least 10 days and that no new date has been set. Mr. Sharansky, 48, was convicted of treason in 1977 for allegedly spying on Russia for the United States. After his release from prison, he settled in Israel. Mr. Sharansky's brother-in-law, Michael Stieglitz, died Wednesday of a heart attack. Mr. Sharansky's office said.

Teenager jailed for 'fishing' chickens

CAIRO (AFP) — As 16-year-old thief has been jailed for a year for "fishing" his neighbours' chickens, the government daily Al Akhbar reported on Wednesday. The teenager, a car mechanic, used a fishing rod and corn or broad beans as bait to catch the chickens in the rural town of Zaagazig, north of Cairo, from the back yards and rooftops of neighbours' homes. The boy sold the chicken at the market-place, the paper said.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Iris and Orde and the Gang
14:35 Out of This World (comedy)
15:00 Corington Cross
15:30 Feature: Big Ideas-U-Family
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Continuation of Film
17:30 Le Monde Est a Vous
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Atomes Crochus
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Pacific Station (Comedy)
20:00 American Chart Show
20:30 Material World
21:00 Kung Fu
22:00 News in English
22:25 Feature: Deadly Whispers

PRAYER TIMES

04:44 Fajr
06:04 (Sunrise) Doha
11:21 Dhuhur
14:14 Asr
16:14 Maghreb
17:59 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 637735
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637441

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church Tel. 827126
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Scattered showers are expected at intervals with skies cloudy to partly cloudy and winds north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Amman 11/19
Aqaba 18/28
Deserts 10/21

Jordan Valley 18/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 80 per cent, Aqaba 45 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 844788
Dr. Bassam Karadsbeh 792240
Dr. Khalid Abdo 657129
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 845071
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637640
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484
Al Quds pharmacy 1

ZARQA:
Dr. Ismail Tallawi 903499
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 657111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/52
Khalidi Maternity 642816/2
Akileh Maternity 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

642362

Mafkas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 66722791

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir, 775111/26

Army, Marka 89161/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323

Zarqa National Hospital 09900560

Ibn Sina Hospital 09986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990690

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02725555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02722755

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 02747100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03131411

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 08853200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08 (53250).

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Samara (RJ)
08:15 Bombay (RJ)
09:15 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:45 New Delhi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:05 Beirut (RJ)
10:30 Colombo (RJ)
16:05 Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
16:25 London (RJ)
16:40 Casablanca (RJ)
17:35 Moscow (RJ)
19:05 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
19:25 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
19:40 Rome (RJ)
19:40 Athens (RJ)
23:59 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
Other Flights
11:00 Doha (QF)
12:40 Doha (GF)
13:30 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Shirqah (AH)
15:15 Damascus (QF)
16:15 Dubai (EK)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
21:40 Tel Aviv (LY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20 Aqaba (RW)
18:55 Tel Aviv (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
07:15 Moscow (RJ)
10:30 Abu Dhabi, Al 'Ain (RJ)
11:00 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
11:05 Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:15 Rome (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
13:40 Athens (RJ)
19:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
20:10 Cairo (RJ)
20:15 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:20 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Jakarta (add) (RJ)
01:45 Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta (RJ)
Other Flights
06:00 Istanbul (TK)
07:35 Beirut, London (BA)
07:45 Beirut (ME)
11:45 Damascus (QF)
12:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
15:00 Algiers (AFH)
15:00 Riyadh (SV)
16:00 Doha (QF)
17:15 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
22:50 Tel Aviv (LY)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)
04:35 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:20 Aqaba (RW)
20:50 Aqaba (RW)

HJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500
Banana 550/550
Banana (imported) 800/650
Cabbage 100/40
Carrot 290/200
Cauliflower 230/180
Cucumber (large) 140/80
Cucumber (small) 220/170
Eggplant 140/80
Garlic 700/500
Grapes 340/260
Lemon 370/180
Marrow (large) 140/100
Marrow (small) 250/200
Onion (green) 300/180
Onion (dry) 170/120
Olive (green) 450/400
Olive (black) 700/500
Orange 550/350
Pear 650/450
Pepper (hot) 260/200
Pepper (sweet) 200/120
Pinto 340/180
Spinach 250/700
String Bean 550/350
Tomato 280/200

BRIEF

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HAZ RAILWAY TR

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MARKET PRICES

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Crown Prince delivers speech stressing people's participation

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday stated that Jordan is entering the 21st century armed with a good deal of experience in attaining economic growth and in pioneering political, social and cultural experiments.

This, he maintained, will help the Kingdom manage the challenges of the coming era.

Prince Hassan's address was delivered on his behalf, by former Information Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin, to the opening session of a workshop organised by the media and the Urban Development Society in conjunction with the Housing and Urban Development Department.

"Jordan is currently pursuing the implementation of a national economic reform package with financial procedures, structural changes and amendments to national laws in addition to administrative reforms. These are aimed at liberalising the national economy and enabling it to become competitive within the concept of globalisation."

Prince Hassan said. "Simultaneously, Jordan is traversing the path of political development, having completed concrete legislation which protects freedoms of expression, guarantees political pluralism and paves the way for the emergence of a civil society able to cater to the challenges the future brings," he added.

The Prince said that Jordan has focused on social development and has succeeded, in a relatively short period of time, in ensuring academic and vocational training and public health services, in addition to its implementation of projects in housing and urban development.

He stressed that economic development must work jointly with human resources as was emphasised in the United Nations Development Programme's 1996 report.

"Any development which does not serve the public interest or does not cater to their extant needs will be met with passive attitudes on their part and therefore

the people's participation in the development process is obligatory and it is the media's duty to help attain that goal," Prince Hassan stated.

He also maintained that the state has a duty to facilitate communications and remove barriers on information provision while permitting those involved with the media to acquire training and acquaint themselves with modern methodologies.

The Crown Prince advised objectivity in all those employed in the media and writing on development issues and urged the presentation of issues and problems without exaggeration nor belittlement that these issues might be creditable in the public view.

He also suggested a careful examination of the effects of modern technology on the cultural and social environment as well as technological and informational methods of promoting socio-economic development.

Princess participates in Parisian Golden Jubilee

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputising for HRH Crown Prince Hassan, HRH Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan partook in the Golden Jubilee for the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Foundation which took place at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

Participating in the celebration was the director general of UNESCO, the mayor of Paris, the French minister of culture, former U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, Queen Sonja of Norway, Queen Margareth of Denmark and Prince Bernard of Holland among others.

Princess Sumaya subsequently attended a dinner banquet hosted by the French minister of culture.



HRH Princess Sumaya Bint Al Hassan

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

• "Amor proprio" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, on Thursday at 4:30 p.m.
• Comedy "Dave" at the American Centre on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION/SALE

• Exhibition/sale of antiques, crafts, old engravings, photographs, old maps and cartography of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands at Um Al Kundum on Airport Road off the Arabian Horse Club on Friday.

Workers threaten to cut electricity

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Approximately 3,000 Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) employees Wednesday instigated an open strike and threatened to cut electric power from Amman and other cities if their demands are not met.

However, Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh warned the strikers against cutting the power supplies, saying that such action would be considered as harming public security.

The workers, who are employed at the JEPCO head office in Amman as well as other plants in Salt, Madaba and Zarqa, are demanding a fifteenth annual salary and a

hardship allowance from company management.

President of the Electricity Workers Union Khalifeh Ma'aitah told the Jordan Times "our strike will continue Thursday if the management does not respond favourably to worker demands." He also threatened the interruption of electric power on Thursday and Friday if the management persisted in its refusal to engage in direct dialogue with the union.

Mr. Ma'aitah maintained that "the strike is legal and legitimate and draws its sanction from Article 135 of the Jordanian Labour Law."

He described stands taken by the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) and the Ministry of Labour

as "disappointing," further stating that he felt that they have not adequately fulfilled their duties.

He was referring to a federation statement issued Tuesday which urged the strikers to reconsider their position and called the threatened strike as "illegal."

"The workers totally disregard that statement as it does not reflect the philosophy of the labour movement in general and the electricity workers in particular," said Mr. Ma'aitah.

However, he stated that the union is amenable to meeting with management and solving the problem through direct negotiations aimed at safeguarding the interests of both parties.

Minister of Labour Abdul

Hafez Shakhaneh assured the Jordan Times of his investment in the provision of electric supplies to all citizens. He rejected union threats to disrupt electric power as an illegal action violating public security.

He stated that he found the threatened strike "disturbing" and that he had met with the labour union and company management until early Wednesday morning in a bid to avert the strike but that his efforts were in vain.

"I am not in a position to say whether or not the workers' demands are just but I believe the issue can be settled through a rational dialogue," Dr. Shakhaneh maintained.

"I assert that no one person is above the law and that

workers are obligated to abide by the law. As the issue is now in the hands of a ministry-appointed mediator, the workers ought to await the results of the arbitration. The minister added.

He promised that "electric power [would] not be cut off in any form" and further warned that disruption of power supplies "[would] be considered as tampering with public security and [that] the ministry has alternative methods to guarantee continued power supply to all recipients."

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to persuade the workers to suspend their strike for an additional 48 hours while awaiting for the official arbiter to duly resolve the issue.

Defence in Ajloun case requests speedy trial

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Military prosecution in the case of three men accused of subversion Wednesday rested their case at the State Security Court, opening the way for the defence to begin its arguments.

Kremah Mahmoud, 28, Yousef Ahmad, 27, and Ali Mahmoud, 27, from the Hashemite town of Ajloun, are charged by the military prosecution with plotting to carry out extremist attacks and possessing illegal explosives with illicit intent.

In October, the three defendants pleaded guilty to illegal possession of explosives but denied charges that they intended to activate them.

During Wednesday's court session, defence attorneys asked the military tribunal to accelerate the pace of the trial so that the defendants, if convicted, might "benefit from the Royal Amnesty offered by His Majesty the King."

"I am going to present my closing arguments in the next court session in an effort to quicken the pace of the trial so that if my clients are convicted they might benefit from a Royal pardon," Attorney Radi Ghareibeh said.

The prosecution alleges that the three men collected land mines from an Ajloun field in Nov. of 1995 and planned to target visiting Israeli tourists in the area.

However, the three were apprehended by authorities before any such attack took place.

In Wednesday's court session, the tribunal heard the last prosecution witness, a captain in the engineering battalion, who told the court that the land, from which the defendants allegedly pulled the mines, was surrounded with barbed wire and that there were several signs warning against the danger of trespass.

"We do annual maintenance work on the barbed wire and no one is supposed to enter the area and therefore [anyone doing so] must be entering illegally," he told the court.

According to Attorney Ghareibeh, Ajloun community leaders as well as the families of the three defendants met with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Wednesday morning asking that the three youths be included in the Royal Amnesty.

The prime minister assured them that he will help as soon as a verdict is issued in the case of the three men," Mr. Ghareibeh told the Jordan Times.

According to officials, some 1,600 person's cases are to be examined under the amnesty, which does not cover prisoners convicted of menacing national security, espionage, rape or murder.

At the close of the session, the military tribunal set Dec. 7 to hear the defendants' testimony in the case.

'British interest in business ties with the Kingdom expanding'

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — British interest in conducting business with Jordan is continuing to grow with several joint ventures having already been set up in the past year and others in the pipeline and the London government is strongly encouraging the trend, according to officials at the British embassy here.

British exports to the Kingdom increased by 23 per cent so far this year as compared to its corresponding period last year, but Jordanian exports to the U.K. slipped by four per cent during the same period, said Roger S. Sykes, commercial secretary at the embassy.

Briefing the local press mainly on a British initiative on global free trade to be launched at a World Trade Organisation meeting in Singapore next month, Mr. Sykes and Samar S. Ashgar, senior commercial officer at the embassy, were strongly upbeat regarding prospects for the continued enhancement of Jordanian-British economic ties.

Among the tangible signs of growth in business relations, they said, were an 80 per cent increase in the number of British businessmen visiting Jordan and a 25 per cent increase in the number of inquiries to the commercial section at the embassy is receiving from Jordanian businessmen in addition to a growing number of companies opening



Roger S. Sykes

regional offices in the Kingdom.

At least four British commercial events were held in Jordan this year, including a British week in June.

British companies have already invested several million sterling pounds in Jordan, prominent among them a three-million pound investment by Readymade Mix Concrete, (which expects to raise the stake of 10 million pounds in three years), and a 1.5 million pound joint venture involving Phosrock, a construction chemicals company.

The Lewis Trust Group, which operates 18 hotels in Spain and Israel, is building a 300-bed hotel at Aqaba and several other British firms are closely involved in supplying equipment and consultancy services to the dozens of new hotels coming up in the Kingdom.

Eighteen Jordanian companies have licensing arrangements with British

firms. A British delegation headed by Michael Thomas of the Middle East Association, a London-based advisor to the Committee for Middle East Trade, is scheduled to pay a four-day visit to Jordan beginning today, Mr. Sykes said.

Ms. Ashgar said that in addition to exploring business opportunities, Mr. Thomas would also discuss details related to holding the next meeting of a joint committee with the Jordan Businessmen's Association (JBA).

The joint committee, which was set up during British Prime Minister John Major's visit last year, holds two meetings every year, one in Jordan and the other in Britain.

Ms. Ashgar said British exports to Jordan were worth 120 million sterling pounds in 1995 while Jordanian exports to Britain were worth 24 million pounds.

While Jordan's imports of British products went up by 23 per cent so far this year, the Kingdom's exports to Britain dipped by four per cent.

Mr. Sykes said that seedless grapes were one of the major items that Jordan exports to Britain. Other items include garments and traditional products.

Ms. Ashgar said the embassy was planning 10 trade missions to Jordan in 1997 and a major exhibition of British products in May.

A journey through the holy sites of Jordan

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Are you looking for a safe place for your belongings? For a healing place? For a judge to settle your disputes? Turn to nature. Or at least this is what people used to do hundreds of years ago — and some still do.

This was the theme of architect Ammar Khammash's lecture on the Holy Sites of Jordan Tuesday. Jordan, he said, contains many historical sites which at one point served as religious and social institutions to which people resorted for spiritual healing and comfort.

"It may be said that Jordan, with its blessed land, and with its wealth of

sacred sites, is in itself a spiritual treasure with the potential to grace the lives of all those who visit it," HRH Prince Ghazi says in the introduction of a book entitled the Holy Sites of Jordan.

Mr. Khammash used the book and its premise as a reference for his lecture.

In the introduction, the Prince explains that Jordan has four types of Islamic holy sites: graves where a blessed personage, a prophet or a companion is actually corporeally buried, shrines where a blessed personage is not necessarily corporeally buried but has visited and graced during his/her lifetime or even after his/her death... (in another's vision or mystical state) and has consecrated

to God, as well as other religious sites. Other sites include historical sites associated with important events in the course of the history of a specific religion.

"God has blessed particular people and particular places, just as He blessed particular months, days and trees such as the olive among other trees."

In his lecture, Mr. Khammash led the audience on a voyage from north to south and shed light on the ways in which people utilised different sites in their daily lives as social institutions.

He asserted that people strongly wished to have a physical connection with these sites by leaving fabric on them or tinting the walls

with henna.

They combined particular sites into an integral institute which could serve as bank, hospital, or court to settle their disputes.

In Sarfah, near Karak, lies the shrine of Prophet Suleiman, son of the Prophet Daoud and his successor as King of Israel. Prophet Suleiman is believed to have had control over the wind and jinns and an ability to understand the language of the birds, said Mr. Khammash. Near the shrine, he added, exists a tree which local people perceived as having a healing power and control over the wind.

Mr. Khammash talked about his personal experience with diverse holy sites in Jordan. A particularly riveting story was of a severely ill man who lived four kilometres away from the tree in Sarfah. While Mr. Khammash was looking for the shrine few years ago, this man heard of the search and begged to be taken to the tree to seek a cure for his illness. During the long walk the weak man was stumbling until he saw the tree at which point he began to run with excitement.

Mr. Khammash continued saying that near the entrance of Prophet Suleiman's tomb, shepherds left their belongings and some coins. "Who would dare to take these

coins?" he asked estimating a probable prevailing thought.

In Al Bathnan village, southwest of Karak, there is an African tree called "Speena Christy" whose name stands for spine and Christ, Mr. Khammash said, describing another holy site. He added that local people had feelings of respect and fear towards the tree in which there are small rooms used for lighting candles in the evenings. People of Bathnan told Mr. Khammash that once a man cut a branch from the tree and then proceeded to fall ill until he sat under the tree and begged for forgiveness.

One of the sites which lost its role as a social institution, Mr. Khammash explicated, is the tomb of Prophet Yusha' near Salt. He said that the shrine crumbled through time, adding that it was one of the shrines where pilgrims left pieces of green fabric in the belief that if they left their personal possessions near the sites they would be restored to health.

He said that some sites which have disintegrated with time are currently neglected. Mr. Khammash urged that these sites be protected by safeguarding and not by renovation, referring to attempts to destroy certain sites in order to construct new buildings.



The shrine of Prophet Sulayman in Sarfah near Karak (Photo from the book Holy Sites of Jordan by Fakry Malkawi)

In Ma'an, south of Amman, there was an arrangement of cube houses, which again have dissolved through neglect, Mr. Khammash said. In one of the houses, he added, existed five graves with green fabric and candles. And on the walls there were traces of henna. All this showed that the house was used to link people to nature which, in their conception, was powerful.

Near the ancient city of Petra, he said, lies the site of Prophet Haroun. The site had many temples and most importantly therein existed a crescent 500 years before Islam which was later adopted in mosques, Mr. Khammash said.

He emphasised the importance of continuity which has preserved certain themes of the past.

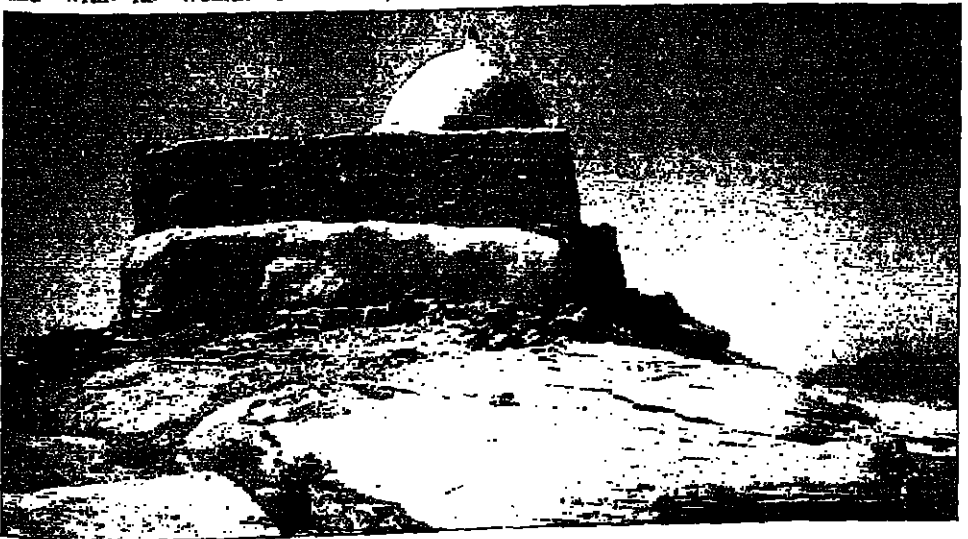
Mr. Khammash said the tomb of Prophet Haroun is situated on a mountain top outside Petra. Prophet Haroun was the elder brother of Prophet Musa and the descendant of Prophet Ibrahim. The tomb, which Mr. Khammash described as a "powerful place" is still nicely preserved.

Mr. Khammash also talked about other sites viewed by people as holy places. He said that people used to store their harvest under an oak tree in Al Mastaba between Amman and Jerash near the site of Prophet Hud. The book,

Holy Sites of Jordan, talked about the story of Hud as mentioned in the Qur'an. It described Hud as being sent to people to warn them to worship the one God and when they accused him of madness, God sent them a terrible drought as a warning and when they still did not heed that he sent further punishments and eventually destroyed them with the exception of Hud and his faithful who escaped.

For that reason people stored their harvest under that tree near the tomb of Prophet Hud.

Mr. Khammash concluded by saying that people are turning back to spirituality and beliefs of the past.



The tomb of Prophet Haroun in Petra (Photo from the book Holy Sites of Jordan by Fakry Malkawi)

Aid agencies ring alarm bell on refugees missing in Zaire

MINOVA, Zaire (R) — As a reluctant world backed away from an armed intervention force in central Africa, international agencies rang alarm bells Wednesday over the fate of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

"There are hundreds of thousands still out there, we are doing our best to locate them, but several thousands fled fighting into the hills," said Peter Kessler, spokesman with the U.N. Refugee agency, UNHCR.

He said the world had focused on the mass exodus of some half-a-million Hutu refugees from eastern Zaire to Rwanda, but virtually forgotten about an estimated 500,000 in the Bukavu area, south of Lake Kivu, whose exact whereabouts are now unknown.

"These people have a basic human right to food, but no-one is getting into that area," Mr. Kessler added.

Hundreds of thousands of Hutu refugees fled back into Rwanda last weekend to escape fighting between Zairean rebels, supported by Rwanda, and soldiers from Rwanda's Hutu-dominated ex-army and militias, who

organised the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Reports from eastern Zaire said the area was awash with heavily-armed rebels.

Regional experts believe the rebels, sharing the Rwandan government's distaste for any outside intervention, fear a major humanitarian operation would encourage the remaining refugees to stay rather than return home.

Some analysts also speculated the rebels, who broke the hold of the Hutu gunmen over the refugees last week in the Goma area with heavy artillery assaults, also wanted to hunt down and finish off their foes before any U.N. force arrived.

But the force may never arrive. The United States has scaled back its commitment and Canada, the country due to lead the emergency force, said Tuesday the mission was on hold until meetings this week clarified what was happening in the region.

Journalists in eastern Zaire said the countryside was littered with bodies of people who had been caught up in the three-cornered

conflict among Zairean army troops, hardline Hutu refugees and local Tutsis.

In Ottawa, Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said a political meeting on the situation would be held in New York Wednesday, followed by a military meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, Thursday.

"Decisions are not being made until those evaluations are finished," he said. He said the situation was so fluid in eastern Zaire and information so fragmented that Canada and other participants needed a clearer picture to take a decision.

The U.N. Security Council has authorised a mission to get aid to the Rwandan refugees and help get them home.

More than a million Hutus fled Rwanda in mid-1994 after the country was overrun by Tutsi rebels, now in government, after the genocide of up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the Hutu extremists.

Grisly evidence of the terror that has rained down on eastern Zaire was found by journalists Wednesday.

A Reuters correspondent drove into the hills behind

Sake but was blocked by Zairean rebels outside a small village and ordered to turn round.

In the bush at the side of the road were the bodies of at least three people. Journalists who tried to count the bodies were told brusquely to turn around and leave.

On a road going into the Masisi region, journalists discovered a mother, father and five children who had been killed with machetes, clubs and bullets.

A child strapped to its mother's back lay with its head entirely smashed open and its brains on the road.

The entire area around Kirotshe, Minova and Sake to the west of Lake Kivu was controlled by heavily-armed Zairean rebels, some of them no more than 10 years old.

Local people said that some 7,000 people from Bukavu camp who had tried to move northwards towards Goma last week to join the refugee flow home had been blocked by Hutus belonging to the Interhamwe militia halfway along Lake Kivu.



President Clinton addresses a joint sitting of the Australian Parliament in the House of Representatives Chamber Wednesday. President Clinton is on a four-day visit to Australia (Reuters photo)

Clinton seeks deeper engagement with China

CANBERRA (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton, in his first major foreign-policy speech since his re-election, called Wednesday for a deeper engagement with China and reaffirmed Washington's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region.

In a wide-ranging speech to the Australian parliament, Mr. Clinton praised Australia for its recent diplomatic leadership on a nuclear test ban treaty and said nothing need come between the two historic allies in the Pacific.

But four days before a meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Mr. Clinton addressed his real message to China — reassuring Beijing that the United States had no interest in trying to contain the Asian giant.

"The direction China takes in the years to come, the way they define its greatness in the future, will help to decide whether the next century is one of conflict or cooperation," Mr. Clinton told a joint session of both houses of parliament.

Striking a reassuring tone, he added: "The United States has no interest in containing China. That is a negative strategy."

"What the United States wants is to sustain an engagement with China... in a way that will increase the chances that there will be more liberty and more prosperity," he said.

Mr. Clinton's comments came after a meeting with Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

Mr. Howard has tried to boost ties with Washington since being elected at the head of a conservative coalition in March but has seen Australia's relations with China suffer as a result.

Mr. Clinton told the parliament that the United States, even though it retained close ties with Europe, must look to the east no less than to the west.

"First we share the view of almost every nation in Asia that a strong American security presence remains the bedrock for regional stability," he said.

"We will maintain about 100,000 troops across the Pacific just as we maintain about 100,000 troops in Europe. We will keep them well-trained, well-equipped and well-prepared," he said.

"We will continue to revitalise our core alliances, both bilaterally and regionally."

"These efforts, let me say clearly, are not directed against any nation. They are intended to advance security and stability for everyone so that we can grow together and work together, all of us, in the new century," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Clinton meets with China's leader before the start of a round of talks on trade issues at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

He also plans talks Sunday with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam.

Mr. Clinton reaffirmed Washington's military commitment to maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific region, citing a decision for

2,500 U.S. marines to train in northern Australia.

"They are seriously a powerful symbol and a concrete manifestation of our place to protect stability in the Pacific," said Mr. Clinton.

In July, Washington and Canberra signed a defence agreement aimed at bolstering security ties by upgrading joint U.S.-Australia military facilities, the establishment of a small marine base in Australia and boosting joint training.

The move prompted Beijing to accuse Australia of being used by Washington as part of a containment pincer with Japan.

Borrowing a phrase used by Mr. Howard to describe his foreign policy attitudes, Mr. Clinton said "the U.S. need not choose between our history and our geography. We need not choose between Europe and Asia."

"In a global economy with global security challenges, America must look to the east no less than it looks to the west," Mr. Clinton said.

Sri Lanka mounts air strikes on rebels

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan fighter jets bombed two Tamil Tiger guerrilla bases in the north of this Indian Ocean island, an air force spokesman said Wednesday.

"We took two targets given by intelligence," he told Reuters. "We're now monitoring rebel radio transmissions to assess the damage and their casualties."

Tuesday's attacks targeted Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) bases at Pooneryn and Kokkivil, military officials said.

LTTE clandestine radio said two Kfir jets took part in the air raid. It gave no further details.

Two other rebel positions

were hit in airstrikes in the Hoppigala jungle of eastern Batticaloa district over the weekend, the air force spokesman said.

Local newspapers said the air strikes were aimed at preempting LTTE attacks during the Tamil Tigers' "heroes' week", when rebel forces traditionally stage attacks to honour fallen fighters.

Security forces went on full alert Tuesday, the start of heroes' week.

The LTTE has fought the Sinhalese-dominated government for 13 years for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east.

It has not commented on heroes' week, which culminates with the 42nd birthday

of rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran on Nov. 26.

The LTTE has in the past marked the week with attacks on military installations and remote Sinhalese villages bordering northern and eastern regions.

At least one soldier was killed Wednesday and four seriously wounded when their saracen armoured personnel carrier was blown up by a rebel mine near Kodikamam in northern Jaffna, a military spokesman said.

"The vehicle caught fire but we managed to take out seven people," he said.

The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed since the separatist war began in 1983.

Australian murderer not insane — court

HOBART, Australia (R) — Australian mass murderer Martin Bryant was not criminally insane when he gunned down 35 people at Port Arthur in April, but was suffering from a personality disorder, a court was told Wednesday.

"There is no such (insanity) defence available to him," prosecutor Damian Bugg told the Tasmanian Supreme Court, referring to the findings of a psychiatric report on Mr. Bryant.

Mr. Bryant two weeks ago week reversed his previous pleas and confessed to murdering 35 people at the Port Arthur historic convict site on the island state of Tasmania on April 28.

But Mr. Bryant's lawyer John Avery Wednesday told the court his client would give no explanation for his killing spree.

"I am instructed to make no submissions or place before the court any explanation or reason for this massacre, other than can be gleaned from the medical material," Mr. Avery said at the end of a two-day sentencing hearing.

The court will sit again for sentencing Friday.

A psychiatric report on Mr. Bryant before the court said the 29-year-old suffered from a personality disorder known as asperger's syndrome, which affects about three per cent of the population, and in some ways is similar to autism.

Asperger's syndrome cannot be treated and its origins are unknown.

The prosecution says Mr. Bryant planned the massacre for months and has asked for him to be jailed for life, without parole.

Mr. Bryant's lawyer Avery agreed that a life sentence would be right for the killer. "The accused revels in the notoriety he has achieved, but in a simple way he accepts the enormity of his actions," Mr. Avery said.

"Martin Bryant accepts that in all probability he will never be released from prison and will die there and he also accepts that will be not an inappropriate sentence," he said.

"An answer for the burning question 'why?' must for the time being remain with the accused," Mr. Avery added.

On Tuesday, the court was told that Mr. Bryant took less than two minutes to slaughter 20 people, all at close range as they ate their lunch.

Indian politics hits rocky patch

NEW DELHI (R) — India's right-wing Hindu opposition party forced the abrupt adjournment of the upper house of parliament Wednesday as tension built within the governing coalition over economic policy.

Vice-president Kocheril Raman Narayanan adjourned the Rajya Sabha, or upper house, amid an uproar over populist Uttar Pradesh state, where for weeks the nation's three major political groupings have been fruitlessly jockeying for power.

It was a noisy start to the winter session of parliament, which reconvened only briefly Wednesday after a three-month break. The lower house, or Lok Sabha, was also quickly adjourned to mourn a deceased member.

The month-long session was expected to test the strength of Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda's centre-left minority government in the face of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Hindu nationalist BJP is keen to exploit tensions within Deve Gowda's six-month-old, 13-party coalition.

The BJP wasted no time raising a complaint over the logjammed political scene

in Uttar Pradesh, the nation's most populous state with 140 million people.

The right-wing BJP emerged as the biggest single party in recent state assembly elections but short of an outright majority. Deve Gowda's United Front coalition came in second, and the Congress Party, allied with a regional party representing the lowest Hindu Castes, came in third.

Congress, which is providing make-or-break support to Deve Gowda's coalition in the federal parliament but has not joined the government, had demanded that the United Front support its candidate to become Uttar Pradesh chief minister.

But the United Front declined, stoking tension with congress. Then last month, President Shankar Dayal Sharma imposed federal rule over the state after the sparring parties were unable to form a local government.

"The continuance of president's rule in Uttar Pradesh is against the constitutional norms," opposition leader Sikandar Bakht of the BJP told the upper house Wednesday.

He was quickly drowned out by government supporters, and Narayanan adjourned the session until

Thursday.

Later Wednesday, the United Front's policy-making steering committee was scheduled to meet against a backdrop of rising tension between free traders and communists.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who is spearheading the government's economic liberalisation programme, Tuesday lashed out at Deve Gowda's communist supporters for criticising reforms.

"One cannot be in the government and criticise it," the press Trust of India quoted Chidambaram as saying. "We will not keep quiet if the social and economic reforms are criticised."

The finance minister said his regional party from Tamil Nadu state would have to review its support for Deve Gowda if the Communists held up reforms.

Hanan Mollah, a member of the Communist Party of India-Marxist's central committee, told Reuters that his party did not want to disrupt the government.

But he said the Communists opposed the government's plan to sell off stakes in state-owned firms and to ease restrictions on foreign firms' equity investments in India.

between the stars. This mysterious matter forms the building blocks of stars and is shed from stars as the die.

"By understanding these apparently arcane questions of interstellar gases we're learning a little bit about the eventual future of our very own solar system, as well as the general life cycle of birth and death in the galaxy," said Mark Hurwitz, one of the project scientists.

The Orfeus-Spas will fly free of Columbia for nearly two weeks before being picked up again by the shuttle's robot arm.

Shuttle deploys U.S.-German satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (R) — A small U.S.-German satellite was placed into orbit Tuesday by the crew of space shuttle Columbia, eight hours into a 16-day science mission.

The Orfeus-Spas satellite was released from the mechanical grip of the shuttle's 50 ft. (15 metre) long robot arm at 11:11 p.m. EST (0411 GMT) as Columbia soared over the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of Peru.

Shuttle skipper Ken Cockrell then fired manoeuvring jets to put a safe distance between the two craft.

They will orbit about 60 miles (97 km) apart.

The deployment was one hour, 15 minutes late after pre-flight tests fell behind schedule, partly due to communications difficulties.

"The satellite (was) declared in good health by ground controllers, their checks just taking a bit longer than anticipated," NASA spokesman James Hartsfield said from mission control in Houston, Texas.

The orbiting observatory's three-foot (1-metre) telescope will be trained on the interstellar gases that lie

U.S.-China talks open with warning on Taiwan

BEIJING (R) — China opened Sino-American talks Wednesday with a demand for an end to "massive" U.S. arms sales to Taiwan and a warning that failure to manage tensions over the island would disrupt ties.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher played down differences with Beijing and stressed President Bill Clinton's desire to take positive steps in the relationship.

"The question of Taiwan is the core issue of Sino-American relations," Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told a news conference at the start of day-long talks that will also include meetings with President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng.

"If well-handled, then the Sino-U.S. relationship can grow smoothly. If mishandled, then our bilateral relationship will be subject to disruptions," he said.

"We attach importance to the commitments made by the U.S. government on the question of Taiwan. But we pay more attention to their actions."

Asked how Washington could promote stability across the Taiwan strait, Mr. Qian referred to the 1982 Sino-U.S. communiqué vowing an eventual end to

U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, saying: "We can only feel reassured when this promise is turned into reality."

Despite the tough words, state department spokesman Nicholas Burns later said Mr. Christopher had "a good series of discussions with Minister Qian but there is more work to do with Premier Li Peng and President Jiang Zemin."

Officials said Mr. Christopher and Mr. Qian's discussion of Taiwan was more constructive than Mr. Qian's comments may have suggested. The secretary did not promise to end arms sales to Taiwan.

In an inauspicious beginning to talks Washington considers key to ensuring troubled Sino-American ties are on the mend, Mr. Christopher was nearly 30 minutes late for the Mr. Qian meeting.

But Mr. Burns dismissed the delay as "not a big deal" because the Chinese were informed in advance that Mr. Christopher would be

late so he could hold a last-minute talk by telephone with officials travelling with Mr. Clinton in Australia.

Mr. Christopher's visit is his first to Beijing since a disastrous trip in 1994. He and Mr. Qian are laying ground for talks in Manila Sunday between Mr. Clinton and Mr. Jiang.

The United States has made much of its concerns about China's willingness to sell nuclear technology and advanced conventional weapons to Iran and missiles to Pakistan.

Mr. Christopher said en route to Beijing he would again urge China to end nuclear cooperation with Iran and other officials said concerns about missiles transfers would also be discussed.

Mr. Qian used his opening statement at the news conference to insist China was not engaging in nuclear proliferation and in fact had stepped up efforts to control nuclear exports.

The United States has held up a 1985 agreement on peaceful nuclear cooperation because of concerns over Beijing's nuclear sales. Although the two sides have recently begun talks aimed at allowing the accord to proceed, China is eager to buy billions of dollars worth

of nuclear power reactors from U.S. firms.

Mr. Qian said China had upheld a 1994 commitment not to sell missiles to destabilising regions and was concerned "about massive sales by the United States of advanced weapons to Taiwan."

Washington insists selling millions of dollars worth of "defensive" military equipment to Taiwan — including aircraft, ships and air-defence missiles — is consistent with the Taiwan relations act and the 1982 joint communiqué.

The United States broke relations with Taiwan in 1979 and recognised Communist China. But it maintains unofficial ties with the island which China considers a renegade province.

Mr. Qian promised that "on the basis of equality, China stands ready" to help Washington on non-proliferation and global security issues. He also said Beijing was ready to speed talks on China's entry into the world trade organisation.

Mr. Christopher stressed that Mr. Clinton "recognises the enormous importance of China and the great potential of broader (bilateral) cooperation." The president was "anxious to take positive steps in this relationship," he said.

Belgian committee to take up minister's sex case

BRUSSELS (R) — A Belgian parliamentary commission is set to decide whether a deputy prime minister should be referred to court over allegations of sex with under-age boys.

The commission, which will meet at 10 a.m. (0900 GMT), must decide whether charges in a report from the Brussels prosecutor-general are grave enough to refer deputy Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo to the Cour De Cassation, the country's highest court.

Mr. Di Rupo, 45, does not deny being a homosexual but says he had sex only with consenting adults.

"I repeat for the umpteenth time that I have never been involved in paedophilia. What is happening now to me really seems like political scheming," he told reporters

Tuesday.

Homosexuality is not a crime in Belgium. Sex with children younger than 16 is.

Francophone Socialist Di Rupo is a member of the so-called "core cabinet" of Belgium's centre-left coalition government.

He, the three other deputy prime ministers and Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene form a team of five which effectively governs the country. Their decisions are usually rubber stamped by the full cabinet.

Mr. Dehaene's spokeswoman told Reuters Tuesday his government had hidden out previous crises and would survive this one too.

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A fireman hoses down the burning wing of a United Express commuter plane after it crashed on the runway at Baldwin Field in Quincy with a King Air privately owned plane Tuesday. The collision killed at least 13 people, authorities said (Reuters photo)

Planes explode in U.S. runway collision; 13 die

QUINCY, Illinois (R) — A regional commuter plane hit a small plane and exploded in a fireball as it landed at an Illinois airport Tuesday, killing as many as 13 people on board the two aircraft, police and witnesses said.

A pilot who saw the crash said the commuter plane had just landed and was racing down the runway when it was hit by a small private plane taking off on another runway.

The two aircraft impacted at the intersection of two runways...they just exploded," Mike Coultas told CNN.

"The small plane appeared to inbed itself in the larger plane...they were locked together and engulfed in flames," Mr. Coultas said. "It was a very big fire."

Police said the Great Lakes Aviation/United Express Flight 5925 from Chicago via Burlington, Iowa, struck the smaller plane on landing at Quincy's Baldwin Field Municipal airport.

"There are no survivors," Quincy Deputy Police Chief John Latour told CNN. He said the crash occurred at 6:02 p.m. EST (2300 GMT).

"We believe there were nine passengers on that plane along with a crew of two and possibly two people in the private plane," the police officer said. Latour said he could not confirm the exact number of fatalities until the passenger manifest of the 19-seater commuter plane was obtained.

Mr. Coultas said the larger commuter aircraft had already landed and the smaller plane should not have been rolling down the other runway for take-off.

"I could not believe what I saw," the pilot told CNN.

"The commuter plane had landed and was rolling at 60-70 mph. The smaller plane was probably running at least at that to get its momentum for take-off," Mr. Coultas said.

Firefighters said the flames were contained on the runway within about 15 minutes, though two small fires were still burning.

Quincy police Chief Michael Devoss said authorities had secured the crash scene and would wait for the arrival of investigators from Federal Aviation Administration and National Transportation Safety Board, who were expected Wednesday.

"There is very little to be done out there tonight," he said.

Quincy is located on the Mississippi River, 170 kilometres north of St. Louis and 340 kilometres south west of Chicago.

Thai coalition shows signs of conflict

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's would-be government coalition showed signs of cracks amid a brewing struggle over key economic ministries Wednesday.

Amnuay Virawan, the outgoing deputy premier charged by premier-apparent Chuanwalee Yongchaiyudh with managing the economy, named controversial appointees to his five-man economic team.

There was no immediate word from Chart Pattana leader and former Premier Chatchai Choonhavan, who is also seeking broad responsibilities for the economy in the expected Chuanwalee government.

Speaking to reporters at Bangkok airport after returning from Hong Kong, Amnuay said he would only join a Chuanwalee government if the coalition agreed to support his economic plans and policies, and gave him freedom to implement them.

"For the conditions to be acceptable, I would have to be both deputy prime minister and finance minister. If not I will be unable to carry out my work," he said.

He said he would like to appoint general finance and securities pic, Chairman Narongchai Akkraserani and the former secretary general of the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), Ekkamol Kiriwat, as his deputies.

Appointing Ekkamol — who was sacked from his post at the SEC amid allegations of political interference last December — as deputy finance minister would help restore investor confidence both here and abroad, he said.

However, analysts said the choice of Ekkamol could lead to tensions within the proposed coalition government, as he was fired from the SEC by Surakiart Sathirathai, an advisor to the Chart Pattana Party — the second largest coalition partner.

Surakiart is likely to become foreign minister in the prospective coalition government, which is due to be installed next week following the narrow victory of Chuanwalee's New Aspiration Party (NAP) in Sunday's general election.

"It is a controversial move which could be an obstacle to the unity of the government," said Kanaphan Nantasen of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell Securities (Thailand).

Chatchai, who was premier from 1988-90 during a period of economic boom in Thailand, is reportedly seeking key portfolios for his Chart Pattana Party, including commerce, industry and communications.

Chuanwalee met for lunch Wednesday with leaders of two smaller parties in his coalition and would not be drawn on reporters' questions about the allocation of portfolios.

"We came here to talk and exchange views. We don't want to rush into anything and will work step by step," he said.

Amnuay indicated that he also wants to appoint to his economic team a number of leading figures from commercial Thai banks and finance and securities firms.

He told reporters that he would be willing to work with Chart Pattana people if they were qualified to do the job.

"Foreign investors and local retail investors prefer Amnuay over Chatchai, but locals also look back with nostalgia over the boom years of Chatchai's term," said Kanaphan.

During the election campaign, Nap touted Amnuay as the leader of their economic "dream team" that would tackle the structural problems of the flagging Thai economy.

Chart Pattana had appeared more allied to the opposition democrats, which narrowly lost to NAP, despite the democrats' popularity among the business community in Bangkok and more impressive credentials in economic management.

Market analysts predicted that the commerce portfolio could be a source of conflict between Amnuay's team and Chart Pattana in the horse-trading for key cabinet positions.

Global warming could doom Venice

ROME (AFP) — Venice could be permanently under water within 60 years because of rising sea levels and the sinking of the land on which it stands, a government report has warned.

The report on climate change as a result of the "greenhouse effect" caused by the burning of fossil fuels and other human activity was issued Tuesday by the environment ministry and a national body for Promoting Alternative Energy Sources (ENEA).

It said that global warming, resulting in the melting of ice caps and glaciers and the expansion of the water in the world's oceans, would cause sea levels to rise by between 15 and 20 centimetres (six and eight inches).

The report said Venice could be the city most affected, though the whole of the Po Delta in northeast Italy was at risk and should be closely monitored.

As well as the threat of rising water levels, Venice was sinking faster because of natural phenomena and human activity, including increasing extraction of underground water, land reclamation leading to higher tides, and the dredging of the port and canals.

"These actions combined have made the whole city sink by about 25 centimetres on average," the report said. "At present the ground is giving way by about eight millimetres a year, which is more than the forecasts of the experts of the United Nations."

ENEA's director for climate research, Vincenzo Ferrari, appealed once more for urgent action, which despite every intention has never been undertaken to any extent.

Rescue was vital for a city of such incomparable historic and artistic value, Mr. Ferrari said.

The report was issued as the old arguments were revived by another exceptionally high tide Monday which left 90 per cent of the city flooded.

N. Korea refuses phone contact with South

SEOUL (R) — North Korean representatives suspended daily telephone contacts with South Korean officials at the border village of Panmunjom Wednesday, Seoul officials said.

The move follows an announcement by Pyongyang Tuesday that it would temporarily abandon a border liaison office set up in 1992 as a gesture of reconciliation during a rare blossoming of goodwill between the rival Koreas.

"Our side telephoned the North Korean liaison office for a daily test as usual but the northern side did not respond," an official at the national unification ministry said.

Tense relations between the two Koreas have worsened since a North Korean submarine landed 26 agents in South Korea in September.

North and South Korea set up liaison offices in Panmunjom to promote contacts, including cultural and government exchanges and family reunions, after prime ministers of the two sides signed a treaty that included a non-aggression agreement.

But Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Tuesday the North would temporarily abandon its liaison office from Wednesday in response to remarks by South Korean President Kim Young-Sam that Seoul had shut the door on dialogue between the two countries.

"The Panmunjom offices have virtually stopped all functions since (North Korean president) Kim Il-Sung died in July 1994 but there had been telephone contacts for test twice a day," the ministry official said.

Panmunjom is the only crossing point along the heavily fortified demilitarized zone that sealed the division of the Korean peninsula after the 1950-53 Korean war.

The liaison office was opened as a separate channel of communication to the military armistice commission, which monitors a ceasefire that ended the war.

KCNA said that in a Nov. 9 interview with the Washington Post newspaper Kim had ruled out dialogue with the North.

South Korea was embarrassed and shocked by the infiltration of the submarine that landed the 26 North Koreans on a beach.

Twenty-four of the crew have been shot and killed, one was captured alive and another is still at large. Pyongyang maintains the incident was an accident and demands the return of the bodies and the captured agent.

African states angered by U.S. veto against Ghali

UNITED NATIONS (R) — With the United States having cast a veto against U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's re-election, the world body faces an impasse and a probable protracted battle.

Dr. Ghali's supporters, the majority of states in the United Nations as well as the powerful 15-seat Security Council, appear to have no intention of giving up the fight soon.

On Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright voted against a new five-year term for Dr. Ghali on grounds that the United Nations needed someone more amenable to reform. The other 14 council members voted for him.

The council has agreed to give priority to candidates from Africa on the grounds that if Dr. Ghali is denied the second term given his predecessors, he should at least be followed by another African.

But the three African states on the council — Egypt, Botswana and Guinea-Bissau — considered Tuesday's vote a victory for the 74-year-old Egyptian diplomat.

Hour later, representatives from 52 African nations met to plan their next strategy but decided that the Organisation of African Unity had to consult its respective members first.

"Until we are instructed otherwise, he will be the only candidate, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow," said Botswana's Ambassador Legweilla Joseph Legweilla.

According to participants in the meeting, any state that tried to speak about a fall back strategy was silenced quickly, with a majority determined to keep Dr. Ghali's candidacy alive.

There is ample precedent for supporters of a candidate to continue submitting his name despite a veto. In 1981, then-Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim of Austria was vetoed repeatedly by China while the United States opposed Salim A. Salim of Tanzania. Both candidates withdrew after 15 ballots and the council chose Peruvian Javier Perez De Cuellar.

Nevertheless, the antagonism against Washington is genuine, according to diplomats, with many angry at the \$1.4 billion the United States owes the United Nations as well as the way U.S. opposition to Dr. Ghali was announced to the New York Times last June rather than to colleagues.

Some diplomats believe that the United States has done a poor job of lobbying key government leaders around the world, "the American diplomatic machine, which is considerable, has yet to swing into action," said one western envoy.

"So far it's a 'take it or leave it' situation," said one ambassador, noting Tuesday's comments from U.S. state department spokesman Glyn Davis who said the United Nations needed the United States more "than it needs to retain its current leadership."

A western diplomat said several trends appeared to be emerging among the Africans and their allies. One group of countries wanted to force a compromise with Washington, such as a half term for Dr. Ghali — a suggestion the United States rejects.

A second group "was so angry at the United States they want to maximize the damage and in doing so may damage the credibility of the United Nations," he added.

British Ambassador Sir John Weston has already told council members that while his country would have liked to see Dr. Ghali re-elected, U.S. opposition changed the situation and members should deal with it.

France, China and Russia, all of whom have veto power along with the United States and Britain, are strong supporters of Dr. Ghali. The 10 non-permanent council members are Botswana, Chile, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, South Korea and Poland.

Liberia peacekeepers deploy to disarm gunmen

MONROVIA (R) — West African troops this week begin a key task in the elusive search for peace in Liberia — disarming tens of thousands of fighters prior to national elections scheduled for next year.

Several thousand peacekeepers of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG force began deploying outside the capital Monrovia to supervise the disarmament, which starts Friday.

"The deploying will end Thursday, the eve of the disarmament...programme," Major Patrick Okoh, chief military spokesman of ECOMOG told Reuters.

The disarmament, due to be completed by the end of January, is part of a peace timetable brokered by west African leaders in Nigeria in August after a dozen earlier deals collapsed.

ECOMOG has already established control in Monrovia, scene of a flare-up in the seven-year-old civil war in April and May.

West African leaders threatened individual sanctions against any warlord derailing the process — a threat repeated Tuesday by neighbouring Guinea's foreign minister, Lamine Camara.

"Our government is determined to apply sanctions against any faction guilty of violating and creating obstacles to the peace plan," he told a news conference in his capital Conakry.

ECOMOG's commander, General Victor Malu, says the exercise will go ahead on schedule even though he has not yet received reinforcements, as agreed in Nigeria in August.

"The disarmament of all factions will begin Friday, Nov. 22, unfailingly with or without the additional troops needed," he said last week.

Peacekeepers will deploy in the north western town of Voinjama, stronghold of Alhaji Kromah and his Ulimo-K militia, and at camp Naama, one site designated for disarmament of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia.

Mr. Taylor, who launched the war in 1989, and Kromah, sometime rivals, fought as allies in the Monrovia battles earlier this year.

Peacekeepers will deploy to ethnic Krahn strongholds — Zvedra in the southeast, headquarters of George Boley's Liberia peace council, and Tubmanburg, western stronghold of Roosevelt Johnson's Ulimo-K faction.

They will also deploy at Bo on the Sierra Leone border.

Taylor, Kromah and Johnson all say they are preparing to disarm their forces.

Freed American slaves established Liberia in 1847. The war has killed well over 150,000 people.

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Listening to generations, young and 'seasoned'



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Wednesday plant an olive tree in the Prince Hamzeh Garden in the Qweismeh district of south Amman (photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

If necessity is the mother of invention, a step further brings innovation. Last week, when His Majesty King Hussein celebrated his 61st birthday, his 16-year-old son Prince Hamzeh presented him with what can be called a "practical" gift. Saving up his allowances Prince Hamzeh decided that planting trees (those that do not require irrigation but can survive on being rain fed and can produce fruit to benefit local communities) would go a much longer way as a gift to his father and country. In fact, Prince Hamzeh suggested that anyone could do the same by donating and planting trees in lieu of sending gifts to the King on special occasions such as his birthday. Thus when Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor spent a busy day touring several parts of the Amman municipality on Wednesday, they planted the first olive trees on a 20-dunum plot in Qweismeh which has been named Prince Hamzeh Garden. The fruit of the 1,500 trees will go to benefit local residents who are welcomed to harvest the crops. Although Prince Hamzeh was away at school in England during yesterday's event, his idea nevertheless has taken root back home, which could be a good sign of things to come.

A LEADING CONCEPT: Also Wednesday Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor received at Al Nadwa Palace the newly appointed director of the United Nations World University/International Leadership Academy UNU/ILA Adel Safi. Dr. Safi has been a professor of international affairs in Canada and a commentator on TV/Globe television, a Canada-based station which also broadcasts in Australia. The nearly one year selection process by the UNU/ILA studied the education, experience and vision of 70 candidates from around the world. Dr. Safi, who was born in Egypt and educated in France and England, sees the ILA as unique in two aspects. First, the ILA is based on the concept that people learn best from practitioners and therefore the speakers and teachers of the ILA will be practicing leaders. Second, it is based on a concept of leadership as a multi-dimensional activity which is unlike any leadership programme offered in North America and Europe, most of which, he says, are predominantly conceived on equating good leadership with good management

and good administration. Dr. Safi's philosophy is that leadership is based on a concept of shared responsibility and empowerment. During the meeting with Their Majesties, discussions centred on the academy's programmes and its first meeting to be held in Amman next summer with 50 participants. The King expressed his full support for the UNU/ILA which was launched last year by Queen Noor and Secretary General of the U.N. Boutros Ghali at the U.N. headquarters in New York. Dr. Safi was appointed and received by Dr. Ghali in late September, and arrived in Amman shortly afterwards.

N.B. In case those accustomed to seeing His Majesty King Hussein deliver the speech from the Throne in opening sessions of Parliament were taken aback by the King's uncustomary attire Tuesday (civilian suit, hatah and egal), it was not the first time, but perhaps only the second in the last three to four years that he has elected to do so. It was no political statement either, say informed sources, but rather a preference for comfort over the cumbersome regalia of the King's full ceremonial dress.

WARM WORDS FROM 'PARTNERS' Earlier in the week a high-powered delegation from the New York-based International Board of the U.S.-Middle East Project of the Council on Foreign Relations visited Amman. The influential group was led by Henry Siegman, a former head of the American Jewish Congress and now director of the project, and included such figures as Lester Crown (chairman, Executive Committee, General Dynamics), Robert Lifton (co-chair of the project and president, Media El, Ltd., U.S.), Itamar Rabinovich (former Israeli ambassador to the U.S.), Stephen Cohen (president, Institute for Middle East Peace and Development, Canada), Youssef Maiman (president of Israel's Merhav Inc., the company which is working on the oil refinery project in Alexandria), Alan Hegburg (director, International Analysis of Amoco Corporation) and Jonathan Paris (associate director of the project). HRH Crown Prince Hassan hosted a luncheon in honour of the visiting board, of which he is a member, along with such leading Arab personalities as Prince Bandar bin Sultan (Saudi ambassador to Washington), Osama Baz (Egyptian presidential adviser) and Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah (Omani foreign minister). The luncheon was attended by His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, senior officials and prominent political and intellectual personalities. The visitors were so impressed by the hospitality and what they heard from the Crown Prince that one of them had very warm words to say at the end of the luncheon.

"We've visited Egypt, Oman and Israel before we came here. But unlike anywhere else we go, we always find in Jordan a partner, a place where we talk about solutions rather than problems," Stephen Cohen of the Canadian Peace Institute said. "For 20 years I've found in you not just a friend and an enlightened leader," Mr. Cohen said directing his words at the Crown Prince, "but also a teacher." "Twenty years ago, when I first came here, you were already prepared with maps, research and ideas — something which I did not know about then. You are my true teacher." The delegation presented the Crown Prince with a copy of the just produced report of the Middle East Economic Strategy Group, which was prepared by a team of the project, chaired by Paul Volcker, the former chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. The delegation also briefed the King and the Crown Prince on another report being prepared by the board on U.S. strategy for peace in the Middle East, which is expected to be completed early this year.

Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Wednesday receive at Al Nadwa Palace the newly appointed director of the United Nations World University/International Leadership Academy UNU/ILA, Professor Adel Safi (photo by Crystal)

FROM KINGDOM TO KINGDOM: Heading out for the Kingdom of Spain on Sunday is Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. His two-night stay will be concentrated on Monday with meetings with Prime Minister José Maria Aznar and acting Foreign Minister Fernando Villalonga, who is secretary of state for cooperation, and discussions following up on the partnership agreement between Jordan and Spain. Mr. Kabariti will also meet King Juan Carlos. As far as ministerial accompaniment is concerned, we are told that after the extraordinary comeback of the Kabariti government, the prime minister saw it best to leave his entire cabinet at home busy with their proper agendas. But Spanish Ambassador to Jordan Juan Manuel Cabrera is leaving Amman on Saturday in time to meet Mr. Kabariti upon his arrival in Madrid. Meanwhile, there is still no word on where Mr. Cabrera will be posted next as his tenure in Jordan nears its end. Although quite happy to continue his stay in Amman, the ambassador says he may hear something by Christmas or just after the new year.

UP THE RANKS IN BLUE: This was an active week of congratulations for two senior police officers. The recipients of good wishes in newspapers ads and otherwise were two brigadier generals at the Public Security Department (PSD). Sharif Ali Abul Issam and Abdul Qader Ouran were both promoted to the rank of major general, bringing to eight the number of holders of this rank at the PSD. Maj. Gen. Abul Issam will remain at his post as director of prisons, while Maj. Gen. Ouran will continue to be director of the diwan (chief clerk) at headquarters.

CALLING IN A PRO: Artistic talent, a gift of nature, is what has once again won renown architect Kassim Badran recognition. This time, Mr. Badran's designs for the sea front of Sidon in Lebanon were selected by the Lebanese civic organisation charged with overseeing the reconstruction of the country's major cities. Chaired by Bahiyya Hariri, the twice-elected member of the Lebanese parliament, active heritage conservationist and sister of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the organisation studied the submissions of seven international architectural and planning firms (Badran was the only one from Jordan) before deciding. The Hariris have a particular attachment to Sidon as it is the family's hometown and birthplace of the prime minister. What attracted the reconstruction organisation to Mr. Badran's concepts was a maturity of vision which looked at the reconstruction of the sea front and the ancient city as an incremental project that would flow with and into the larger scale reconstruction of the entire Lebanese region. Mr. Badran heads for Lebanon again next week to begin workshops on the massive project aimed at reviving the once vibrant environs of perhaps now Lebanon's second most important port city. The budget for

the task is still in the calculating stages.

WHO'S ON THE LINE? Television talk shows in Jordan are winning recognition of sorts from not only local audiences but viewers in the region as well. In a recent broadcast of Samir Mutaweh's show "Ahadat Wa Shaksiyat" (Events and Personalities) during which the guest was Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, callers from various parts of the region had an unusual opportunity to pose questions to the General via a satellite connection. Dr. Mutaweh's has had other leading figures in the Middle East as his guests on the show, including Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid. During the show with Gen. Bashir, Dr. Mutaweh was called away on a "private" telephone call. The caller, it appeared, was more interested in making his own suggestion for a future guest speaker on Dr. Mutaweh's show. Claiming that he was calling on behalf of Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi, the caller proposed that a future airing of the show should link up with the Colonel as the guest, and further suggested that the topic of discussion be the continued imposition of U.N. sanctions against Libya. Whether or not the Libyan head of state is slated to appear on this, one of many new JTV talk shows, is any body's guess, but another important question being asked in television buff circles is whether one can soon say "Move over Larry King."

CONNECTED TO THE 'CHAINE' The Regency Palace Hotel can hang a new "shingle" in its window next week when it will host what is being called an "enthrone" ceremony to recognise Jordan's official entry into a more than 700-year-old culinary association — Chaine des Rotisseurs of the World Association of Gastronomy. Being named as president of the Jordan chapter of the "chaine" will be Said Sawalha, a member of the proprietor family of the Regency Palace. Beneath the flair of such events, with their select guest lists, six-course gourmet menus, mood music and pomp and circumstance, is a matter of serious significance to the hospitality industry. The Chaine boasts 18,000 members in 120 countries — Jordan being the most recent entrant. To be able to display the Chaine's shield is considered a mark of excellence. Proud of the recognition, Mr. Sawalha was perhaps even prouder still of the fact that he is the youngest member to be named a charter president — most candidates for such posts are well into their 60s and 70s, he said. An added perk is that Royal Jordanian will be granted the "complimentary" entitlement to use the Chaine emblem as well in its First Class cabins and lounges. The Monday evening gala is being held under the patronage of H.M. Queen Noor who will be recognised for her work in promoting culture and environmental preservation worldwide.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Lebanon's filmmakers in conflict over civil war

By Jacques Lhuillier
Agence France Presse

BEIRUT — Lebanon's film industry, plagued by a shortage of funds and burdened by strict censorship, is divided over whether the time has come to deal with the pain of the 1975-90 civil war.

The country's modest movie business, never big enough to challenge the Arabic-language Hollywood of Egypt in the best of days, produces only a few films which play to small audiences.

The latest was Al Sheikhha, a 1995 Swedish-financed production about street gangs which was screened in only one movie theatre and barely sold 12,000 admission tickets.

At the same time, the Hollywood blockbusters that most Lebanese movie theatres

show attract tens of thousands of moviegoers. Even Egyptian films do not bring in as many viewers.

"In Lebanon, we have no means, no proper national cinema centre and no advance payments against returns," said Lebanese film director Borhane Alawiye.

Ghassan Abou Chakra, director of the Cinema Department at the Ministry of Culture, said, "we are working on a system that would help provide proper funding for scripts selected by a reading committee."

The censor wields his knife against films touching on ethnic-religious differences, moral matters and "brotherly" countries, a reference mainly to Syria, which is the major powerbroker in Lebanon and has about 35,000 troops stationed in the country.

Alawiye, a strong advocate of making films

about the war, said, "we should fight amnesia. It's impossible for a script to be unaffected by the war. The public wants to see and understand."

The civil war began with a Palestinian attack on a Christian group and erupted into inter-communal fighting.

"On the contrary, what we need is movies to let off steam," retorted Alain Plisson who founded the first film club in Lebanon in 1956.

Plisson said, "we should not forget, of course, but we should let our memories rest for a while. How many years did it take the Americans to film movies about Vietnam?" he said.

"After all the difficult years, people want to laugh," he said citing the success of The Storm Blows Twice, a Lebanese television movie cross between the U.S. serial Dallas and

Mexican soap operas.

For the past five years, Plisson has been teaching film history and techniques at the Lebanese Fine Arts Academy, a private college in Beirut.

"In their fourth year, my students have to shoot a 20-minute short production. Nearly all of them are about death, abduction, suicide and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Never something light. This is truly a morbid generation," he said.

"After the death of Maroun Bagdadi in 1993, a retrospective of his works in Beirut" was shown by a private cultural centre, said Yasmine, a 27-year-old student.

Bagdadi, probably the most famous Lebanese in the movie business, was the director of L'Otage, a film adapted from a book by French journalist Roger Aukue, who was

abducted during the civil war in Lebanon.

"After every movie, we would gather with some friends and talk about the war for hours, which we never do lately. Eight days later, it made me sick. The same questions, the same piercing of a past that we had nearly forgotten," she said.

"We can eventually shoot pictures about family separations, emigrations... etcetera with the war as background, but not the war itself. It is too soon," said the official at the Ministry of Culture.

Today, there is only one rundown, outmoded film studio in Lebanon. In the 1960s the country boasted four studios, and the Egyptians used to come to shoot up to 25 films per year in Lebanon.

"Lebanon's movie business is now only trying to survive. Simply to exist," said Alawiye.

Settling scores

The Imperiled Red Cross and the Palestine-Eretz-Israel Conflict 1945-1952

Dominique D. Junod
Kegan Paul International, London 1996, £55

THERE IS something seriously disturbing about this book — quite aside from the spelling mistake in the title, unforgivable on the part of a publisher who wants to be taken seriously and a book that tries the same. The situation, the period and the geopolitical context that the author is purporting to place into a serious three-part analysis are certainly of great interest. The Palestine conflict, as seen in the light of the difficulties the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was itself experiencing during the early years after World War II.

Relatively few people today remember the long struggle of influence between the League of Red Cross Societies (today the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) and the ICRC. The International Committee was

under serious attack in the wake of the criticism of its work during the World War II. It is an important point of history that has been quite thoroughly dealt with elsewhere in recent years. The ICRC quickly realised that new ground rules were necessary after that conflict — the first modern war in which civilians were victims as much, if not more, than the military; that is what led to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, still the basis of international humanitarian law.

But from there to consider, as Ms. Junod apparently does, that the whole, of the ICRC's attitude and activity in the Palestine-Israel conflict — before and after the establishment of the state of Israel — was not only influenced by, but, in an oblique way, engineered to serve its cause in its own struggle for survival is seriously skewing historical fact. One example among many: Her interpretation of the ambiguous role played by the Swedish Red Cross, headed at the time by Count Folke Bernadotte, is more than a little tendentious in showing it largely as the spearhead of a Soviet-led attempt to weaken the international Red Cross

movement.

It is also very disturbing to see the author, who worked for many years as a historical researcher at the ICRC, quote the ICRC archives, many interviews with those protagonists who were still available at the time of her research, many private and Israeli archives, but almost no Arab sources. She says, in her introduction, that "the atmosphere was not conducive to calm tempers" when she wanted to consult them, which, she says, was at a time when the Gulf war was brewing. Not good enough; she worked on the thesis that was the origin of this book for over five years and the Gulf War had "brewed" for less than six months. Worse, she goes on to say that although this restriction was "regrettable," the "Arab sources seemed less important," and continues by saying that they did not matter much because the ICRC delegates reflected them better than those on the other side.

Those remarks, at the beginning of the book, give away a great deal. Junod has scores to settle. She slyly insinuates the old accusations that the ICRC was consistently partial

to the Arabs into her personal analysis of a corner of early cold war history. She does not consider, for example, that if the ICRC was more active among the Arabs from 1949 on, it may be because, once the Israelis began to have the upper hand, that is where the majority of victims were. She carefully chooses her sources and quotations — numerous but not always accurate — to reflect her point of view and often ignores anything that would contradict it.

A last and very disturbing element is the fact that this book — a translation from the French, and, according to those who have read both versions, much better than the original, purged of some of its worst errors — was accepted with honours, as a doctoral thesis at the prestigious Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, and published under their auspices. Clio, the muse of honest historical research, must have been knocked out that day by the likes of Polemis — Middle East International.

Liesi Graz

BOOK REVIEW

Back to basics

By Jean-Claude Elias

THE HYPE about Internet continues unabated. People drive on the "Information Superhighway," talk about "surfing on the Web" and dream about browsing through new "Web sites." In spite of the relatively high cost of Internet on-line for the average Jordanian citizen, and of the sluggish rate at which one can access the system over the existing telephone network, all indicators confirm that the Internet fever won't diminish soon.

Flashy terminology aside, most users still have a misconception or a lack of accurate information about the very basic element in any network setup — the modem.

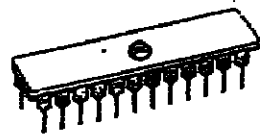
Of course one can explain that the word is an acronym for "modulator — demodulator," but would this really help? Except for the few technically oriented the answer is negative. To confirm the situation, a reader of this column (a prominent businessman and a friend of mine) recently told me that although he himself was a subscriber to the net and a skilled surfer, he still didn't understand what was the exact role of the modem in all that and what were its possibilities.

The first aspect of the question (not knowing the exact role of the modem) wouldn't present any real interest if it weren't for the second part (the possibilities of the modem) to which it directly leads. Indeed, as long as you are accessing the network and getting the information you want from it, you wouldn't really care if the trick was done via a modem or a toaster. Understanding the basics of modems however allows users to get the most and the best out of them.

Standard telephone lines can only carry analog signals — waves, modulations of electric current that are the image, the representation of your speech, for which they were originally designed. Computers, the main building blocks of Internet and other digital networks, need to transmit digital data — series of zeroes and ones — for which telephone networks were NOT designed. Modems are therefore used in order to transmit digital data over analog lines. Inserted between the computer and the telephone line, they modulate (from digital to analog) the signal transmitted by a computer to another one over the telephone line, and they demodulate (from analog to digital) the signal they receive from another computer, again over the same telephone line.

Simply, a modem is a signal converter that allows computer digital data to be sent and received over the analog

chip talk



telephone network. A PC equipped with a modem can be connected to any telephone line. Without a modem it can be connected to none.

Because they are not aware of these simple, basic points, Internet or E-mail users sometimes think that their subscription to the net is valid from one place only: Their home or their office typically, because this is the number they have given when they signed up. One can actually check one's E-mail or access Internet from any computer that has a modem (and the software for it), wherever it may be located. Access to the net has nothing to do with someone's telephone number, it has only to do with the number of the computer server one would connect to. All that a user has to do is input his user ID and his personal password for that. This may sound hard to believe but a significant number of net users do not realise that.

The company with which you have a subscription for E-mail or Internet is called an ISD (Internet Service Provider) and their main computer, to which you automatically connect before anything else is the server. Calling the server, in other words accessing the net, is similar to making a phone call to your office — you can do it from any telephone set, wherever it may be. The difference is that inputting your ID and passwords before being authorised to access the E-mail or Internet allows the ISD to charge your own account accordingly.

With the ever increasing demand for modems, one wonders however why aren't all computers sold with a built-in unit. The demand is such that on three occasions this year these devices were out of stock at virtually all PC stores in Amman. Modems will probably cease to be optional equipment in a year or two. When we reach this point, people will stop worrying about what is in a modem. Personal computers will then be considered as highly sophisticated telephone sets.

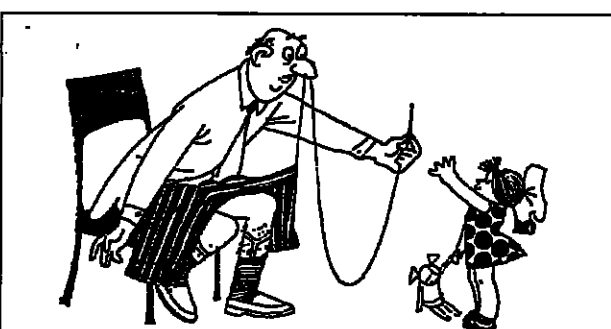
ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

- ** This soldier fought bravely.
Hatha al-jundi harraba beshaja'a.
- ** Welcome, you've illuminated our country.
Ahlan wa sahan, hawwert baladna.
- ** These towers are symbols of our civilisation.
Haathethi al-abraja ramz le-hadaaratina.
- ** Let's travel by train tomorrow.
Hayya nusafir bil-qitar ghadan.
- ** Keep everything top secret.
Leyakon koll shayy sirri jiddan.

"Six," repeated the old man, "and yet you are not as tall as my umbrella." "And how old is your umbrella?" asked the boy.



"Let me do that. I think I can do it better than you."

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. From what play are the lines, "Hath not a Jew eyes, HATH a Jew hands?"
2. Name the highest point in Africa.
3. Why are members of the Congress spoken of as solons?
4. By whom was the Law of Gravitation discovered?
5. Which animal has the ability to feign death when in danger?
6. The pineapple tree is less than one metre long and yields only one fruit?
7. Which is longer: the Tigris or the Euphrates?
8. When was Kuwait University founded?

* FIRST BOY: "Does your mother give you anything when you are good?"
SECOND BOY: "No, but she gives me something when I'm bad."

HAPPY DREAMS

- * BLOSSOMS — Happiness, prosperity, and contentment are promised in a dream of trees, shrubs, or flowers in blossom.
- * BONUS — New social contacts will prove unexpectedly useful in business if you dreamed of receiving a bonus.
- * DOME — The dome of a building seen in your dream signifies unexpected honour or recognition for yourself or someone closely connected to you.

JOKES

* "How old are you, Sonny?" asked an old man a little boy in the park.
"Six," came a quick answer.

Finnish study confirms exercise strengthens bones

LONDON (R) — Those step classes are not only good for toning the thighs — they build bone mass, which can prevent osteoporosis in later life, Finnish researchers reported.

Their findings, published in the Lancet medical journal, add to a growing body of evidence that weight-bearing exercise strengthens the bones.

Osteoporosis, or brittle-bone disease, is caused when calcium leaches from the bones, weakening them. It can lead to hip fractures and other problems.

Ari Heinonen and colleagues at the Ukk Institute for Health Promotion

Research in Tampere, Finland recruited 98 women aged between 35 and 45. None exercised regularly except for walking.

Half were assigned a programme of high-impact exercise three times a week including step aerobics, which puts great pressure on the bones, as well as stretching and calisthenics.

Their diets were monitored to make sure both groups got enough calcium.

The group that did extra exercise saw an increase of 1.4 to 3.7 per cent in their bone mass density, as measured at various sites in their bodies.

"High impact exercise is

effective in improving skeletal integrity and promoting muscular performance and dynamic balance in premenopausal women," Heinonen's group concluded.

"If done on a regular basis, this type of training may be an efficient, feasible and inexpensive way to prevent osteoporosis and osteoporotic fractures."

But Robert Marcus of the Division of Endocrinology, Gerontology and Metabolism at Stanford University

tempered the Finnish group's optimism. "This paper joins a growing number of controlled trials that clearly demon-

strate skeletal benefit from exercise," he commented.

"As encouraging as these reports may be, the exercise-induced gains in bone-mineral density have been modest, generally about one to three per cent, and do not approach the magnitude of difference that distinguishes athletes from the people who watch them."

He concluded: "Given the sedentary nature of Western societies and their generally dismal record of adherence to exercise programmes, questions remain about how practicable the findings might be."

Teamwork — a far-fetched ideal?

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

IF YOU ever do decide to look for something that could be of interest to a Jordanian who is between 16 to 26 years old on the local television channels, do not expect to find anything that really addresses the hopes and concerns of this age group.

Even though the issue of standards on such channels is not an issue here, what we need to highlight is the clear lack of programmes that define who our young people really are today and what they really do.

For starters, all that we can ask for is that the presence of our young people, a distinct social entity, be acknowledged. Luckily, we do not have to look far for such programmes. All that we need to do, at least those of us with satellite dishes, is switch on to Lebanon's Future TV where a youthful image is clearly communicated.

This television channel employs energetic young people, always stylishly dressed, on colourful modern sets along with an interesting line up of programmes.

Could we do the same over here? I am sure that we can once we decide that we really want to. This is the same old story: We can do anything but we truly need to want to do it. We need to possess the courage to make bold decisions. Once our beloved elected representatives decide to pass the heaps of legislation that are supposed to make our somewhat under-rated, dull and miserable lives a whole lot more colourful and interesting.

Or maybe not. Maybe we do not want, or feel that we even need, some good looking cheerful people look back at our frowning faces from our television screens. Maybe we would like to keep the grim-faced and stiff-lipped pitiful excuse for presenters that we currently play host to every day and night.

Ultimately, this is something else that has to do with choice. A choice that provides us with the opportunities to do everything possible in our search for that elusive better life. A choice that demands that we be involved in anything and everything. A choice that demands that we defend our right to a peaceful and comfortable existence.

A decent starting point is to achieve a good working relationship between professionals. By making them feel that they are a part of a team. By teaching them to appreciate one another's efforts rather than continuously undermining them. And by ousting those who seek to destroy, while



others look forward to building. This we have to learn to do. It will be a very arduous task partly because of that selfishness engraved in human nature today, and partly because we, in our little country of 4 million, seem to lack the imagination and the sense of curiosity that fuel excellence.

Play along with this little quiz for a few moments: How many people have actually noticed the newly placed bronze-like balloon down in Wadi Sakra's King Abdullah's Gardens? How many of them did bother to enquire or wonder what it was? How many did bother to try and find out what it really was for? And how many just thought that it was just another cheap publicity stunt by that famous fast food joint that we have come to love to hate?

Plenty, a few, hardly anyone, and maybe all of them are the most probable answers. The balloon is in fact part of the exhibits for a travelling art installation show currently visiting Amman.

What matters at the end is the simple stuff of wanting to know about things and possessing the imagination to be willing to learn. Once this can be accomplished, it will be very easy to truthfully accept what is right and be willing to change what is in need of fixing.

First and foremost, we have to educate and coach ourselves to be inquisitive. To be interested in everything, in art, in music, in colours, in learning and in working. We have got to realise that we can accomplish a great deal once we learn to work as part of a team where giving counts as much as receiving, and maybe that little bit more, and where talking, that all important first big step, remains the anticipated next venture.

JTV CHANNEL TWO WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, November 21, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	7:00	French Programme
2:05	Iris & Ovide & The Gang		Magazine — Faut Pas Rever
2:35	Out Of This World	7:15	Le Journal
3:00	Covington Cross	7:30	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
3:30	Feature — Big Ideas — U — Family	7:35	News Headlines
	Starring: Justin Rosmak & Harold Hopkins	8:01	Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
5:00	News Flash	8:30	Auto-Classics
5:02	Continuation Of Film	8:30	Album Show
5:30	French Programmes	9:10	Documentary (Hold Up The Sun)
	Entertainment Varieties	10:00	News In English
7:00	Le Journal	10:30	Cover
7:15	Magazine — Atomes Crochus	11:15	Miami Vice
7:30	News Headlines	12:00	Yes Minister
7:35	Pacific Station		
8:00	The American Chart Show		
8:30	Material World		
9:10	Kung Fu — The Legend Continues		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Feature Film — Deadly Whispers		
	Starring: Tony Danza & Pamela Reed		

Friday, November 22, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	7:30	French Programme
2:05	Iris & Muppet Show		Magazine — Envoye Special
2:30	Play About + Flintstones	7:35	Le Journal
3:00	See How They Grow	7:35	Magazine — Allo La Terre
3:15	French Programme	7:35	News Headlines
	L'Ecole Des Fans	8:01	Blossom (Comedy)
4:00	Crystal Maze	8:00	Secret Weapons
5:00	News Flash	8:30	Hunter
5:02	Name Your Adventure	9:10	Virtual Reality
5:30	French Programme	10:00	News In English
	Magazine — Envoye Special	10:30	Feature Film — Blood Relation
7:00	Le Journal		Starring: Andree Luchapelle & Mario Saint Amand
7:15	Magazine — Allo La Terre		
7:30	News Headlines		
7:35	Blossom (Comedy)		
8:00	Secret Weapons		
8:30	Hunter		
9:10	Virtual Reality		
10:00	News In English		
10:30	Feature Film — Blood Relation		
	Starring: Andree Luchapelle & Mario Saint Amand		

Saturday, November 23, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	6:15	French Programme
2:05	Adventures Of Mickey And Donald		Magazine — Extra Large
2:30	Circus	7:30	News Headlines
3:00	French Programme	7:35	Murphy Brown
	Document — La France Aux Mille Villages	8:01	Magazine 0-1
3:30	Family Programme — Fete Des Bebes	8:30	Encounter
4:00	Gillette (Sports)	9:10	Star Trek — The Next Generation
4:30	Chris Cross	10:00	News In English
5:00	News Flash	10:30	China Beach
5:02	Futures	11:15	Mission Impossible
5:15	Blue Heelers	12:00	Are You Being Served
6:00	French Programme		
	Serie — Jack		
7:00	Le Journal		
7:15	Magazine — Ziva		
7:30	News Headlines		
7:35	Something Wilder		
8:00	Documentary — Gardens Of The World		
8:30	Prism		
9:10	Lois And Clark		
10:00	News In English		
10:25	Zoya		
11:15	Feature — Casanova Brown — 1975		
	Starring: Gary Cooper & Teresa Wright		

Sunday, November 24, 1996

2:00	Holy Koran	7:00	French Programme
2:05	Fievels American Tails		Document — Ushuaia
2:30	You Bet Your Life	7:15	Le Journal
3:00	French Programme	7:30	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
3:30	Entertainment — Week-ends Specialux	7:35	News Headlines
4:00	World Echo (Documentary)	8:01	The Four Seasons
4:30	The Famous Five	8:30	Super Stars Of Action
5:00	News Flash	9:10	Challenges
5:02	Documentary	9:10	N.B.A. Basketball
5:15	Search And Rescue	10:00	News In English
		10:30	Bugs
		11:15	Hart To Hart
		12:00	Who's The Boss?

Arts & The in

By Vicky Huntley

WERE SHE alive today — and no matter how strong her urge to gloat — Jane Austen would view the unabated revival of interest in her with her famous sense of perspective. People that her books are set in a society and time about which most of us could have no idea, her stories continue to delight, teach and absorb us some 180 years on. We cannot, it seems, get enough of her. The cruise began in earnest with the BBC-TV adapta-



Actress Jennifer Ehle is one — and Colin Firth is her suit — in Pride and Prejudice

Shanghai

By Mark O'Neill
Reuters

SHANGHAI — Shanghai is building a combined theatre and opera house which it says will be the largest in Asia and more advanced than the Sydney Opera House or the Lincoln Centre in New York.

Last month it opened a dazzling 400 million yuan (\$48.2 million) Antiquities Museum and will next month open Asia's third-biggest library costing 600 million yuan.

These are just three of the prestige projects the city is building out of its own pocket after 40 years of neglect, in its rush to regain what it sees as its rightful place as one of the premier cities in Asia and the world.

The opera house — or Grand Theatre as it is officially called — is the most spectacular, with a price tag of \$133 million. The building looks over the People's Square in the city centre, opposite the new museum.

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"It is a matter of regret that a big international city like Shanghai does not have a

The industry created by Jane Austen's novel interest

By Vicky Huntley

WERE SHE alive today — and no matter how strong her urge to gloat — Jane Austen would view the unabated revival of interest in her with her famous sense of perspective.

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The craze began in earnest with the BBC-TV adapta-

tion of *Persuasion* that won a BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) award for best single drama and was broadcast last year.

Oscar class

Later, and even more significantly, there followed BBC-TV's immensely popular serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*, with Jennifer Ehle, who played the lead role of Lizzie Bennet, getting the BAFTA award for best actress. And, in February this year, the much-feted *Sense and Sen-*

sibility earned its star, Emma Thompson, an Oscar for her screenplay of the classic.

Unsurprisingly, that is not the end of it. A film version of *Emma* starring Gwyneth Paltrow is scheduled for release in September, while its television counterpart has just gone into production to be seen in December on ITV (Britain's Independent Television Network).

The ITV single drama is being made by the team that produced *Pride and Prejudice*: Writer Andrew Davies and producer Sue Birtwistle.

This latest revival has also spawned a spin-off trade in Jane Austen CDs, videos, cooking books and T-shirts — all of which would perhaps raise an incomprehensible smile from Miss Austen. She might be baffled that her portrait now decorates people's shirts, considering that when she was first published she did so in secret and used the pseudonym of "by a lady."

Rediscovered talent

Streams of visitors from around the globe continue the trek to her home in Chawton, Hampshire, in southern England. She lived there between 1809 and 1817 with her greatly loved sister, Cassandra, her friend, Martha Lloyd, and her mother. For Miss Austen's followers this most celebrated literary figure — who died at the age of 41, the author of six novels — has never been out of fashion.

"People are rediscovering that you don't need exaggerated sex and violence to get your drama," says Tom Carpenter who, as trustee administrator, runs the house at Chawton for the Jane Austen Memorial Trust. "Her observation of human nature is as relevant today as it was then." A sentiment shared by Susan McCartan, honorary secretary of the Jane Austen Society, who adds: "She was such a psychologist. What she says is so pertinent."

Both have a tangible respect and affection for the writer and both bear witness to the amazing impact of "the media circus" following the film and television exposure. The Austen home is now the key element in the promotion of tourism in Hampshire.

Chawton mania

Chawton village is surviving the mania with fortitude and patience, welcoming the visitors who generally behave with propriety. But there's talk of one tourist moving a milk crate from the front of a pretty cottage because it was not considered aesthetically correct for a photograph he wanted to take.

Cassandra's Cup, the pub



Jane Austen's home at Chawton, Hampshire, southern England, where the writer lived from 1809 until her early death in 1817. The house is now a centre for Austen enthusiasts who come from all over the world to see where she wrote. It looks little changed from her day



Actress Jennifer Ehle is one of Jane Austen's most famous heroines — Lizzie Bennet — and Colin Firth is her suitor, Mr. Darcy, seen here in the 1995 BBC-TV serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*

opposite the house, copes magnificently with the groups of hungry and thirsty callers. Bar staff at the Greyfriar Inn pull the pints with a smile and receive bookings from overseas for table reservations with equanimity. (One visitor is supposed to have asked whether Miss Austen was available for book signings but the story may be a slight exaggeration).

Tom Carpenter — whose grandfather bought the 17th-century redbrick house in 1948 for £3,000, thence founding the Jane Austen Memorial Trust — observes the Austen fever with a pragmatic and genial eye. By the second television episode of *Pride and Prejudice*, the monthly average of 200 visitors increased by 3,000 and the 20,000 yearly average leapt to 30,000 last year.

"The house is very forgiving but we have noticed a lot more creaks from the floorboards. We need to keep a balance and not put it under excess strain," says Mr. Carpenter. No stranger to film crews, he is unlikely to forget the visit from a U.K. breakfast television

programme to coincide with the premiere of *Sense and Sensibility*.

"The camera took the entire nation through the house one morning in just five minutes and then the entire nation came down to the house afterwards."

Accessible heritage

Mr. Carpenter is keenly aware of the need to make this essential part of the English heritage "very accessible." A policy underlined by the fact that the house's curator, Jean Bowden, and her assistant, Ann Channon, make themselves available for broadcasts, talks and interviews.

A crucial support for the trust is the Jane Austen Society that was formed in 1940 with the specific purpose of raising funds to preserve the home where the writer spent the last seven years of her life.

Here, she revised her three early novels for publication (*Elinor and Marianne* became *Sense and Sensibility*; *First Impressions* became *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Susan* became *Northanger Abbey*) and wrote the three novels of her maturity:

Mansfield Park, *Emma* and *Persuasion*. She had begun work on a seventh, *Sanditon*, in 1816 but illness prevented its completion. By that time she had contracted a tubercular disease of the kidneys and died in July 1817.

Country girl

Born in 1775, the daughter of a country clergyman, Jane Austen spent her first 25 years at the village of Steventon in Hampshire. As a child, she wrote amusing burlesques of contemporary sentimental fiction (including her lively and somewhat disrespectful *A History Of England*), establishing the patterns that were to make her one of the great British novelists.

Although she never married and led a comparatively restricted existence, the world of the family, courtship, village life and England's rural gentry withheld few secrets from her discriminating eye. As Austen's character in *Pride and Prejudice*, Lizzie Bennet, puts it: She hopes she "never laughs at what is wise or good, but at foolishness and nonsense."

"She knew what it was like to be a poor relation," says Susan McCartan, of the Jane Austen Society. "She had a privileged grounding in a loving home environment but after her father died she lived on a reduced income and couldn't break into society even in a casual way because she simply wasn't grand enough."

The society is a thriving organisation committed to the preservation of the manuscripts, letters and memorabilia of the author and her family. It nurtures an appreciation and study of her life, work and times, producing scholarly publications and providing authoritative back-up for schools and colleges.

Its current membership is a little over 10,000 — 400 of whom are from overseas (North America, Australia, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Malaysia, Hawaii and Central Africa included).

Susan McCartan sums up all the renewed interest in the respected writer this way: "The revival has introduced Jane Austen to a new generation... one that has never heard of her" — London Press Service.

Shanghai builds prestige library, opera house

By Mark O'Neill
Reuters

SHANGHAI — Shanghai is building a combined theatre and opera house which it says will be the largest in Asia and more advanced than the Sydney Opera House or the Lincoln Centre in New York.

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"Our Grand Theatre will be the largest in Asia (in seats and capacity) and more advanced than Sydney Opera House and the Lincoln Centre in terms of cost and equipment," said Le Shengli, chief of the project's engineering work.

"It is a matter of regret that a big international city like Shanghai does not have a

high-class, large-scale venue to receive orchestras and performers like Pavarotti," he said.

The stage lighting system will be imported from a Belgian subsidiary of Siemens, the sound system from JBL Co of the United States, the stage facilities from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries of Japan and the seats from Italy.

Mr. Le visited theatres and opera houses in France, Italy, the United States and Australia for ideas.

Visiting orchestras currently play in the 1,100-seat Shanghai Concert Hall built in 1930, in the city's basketball stadium or a meeting hall in the city government building.

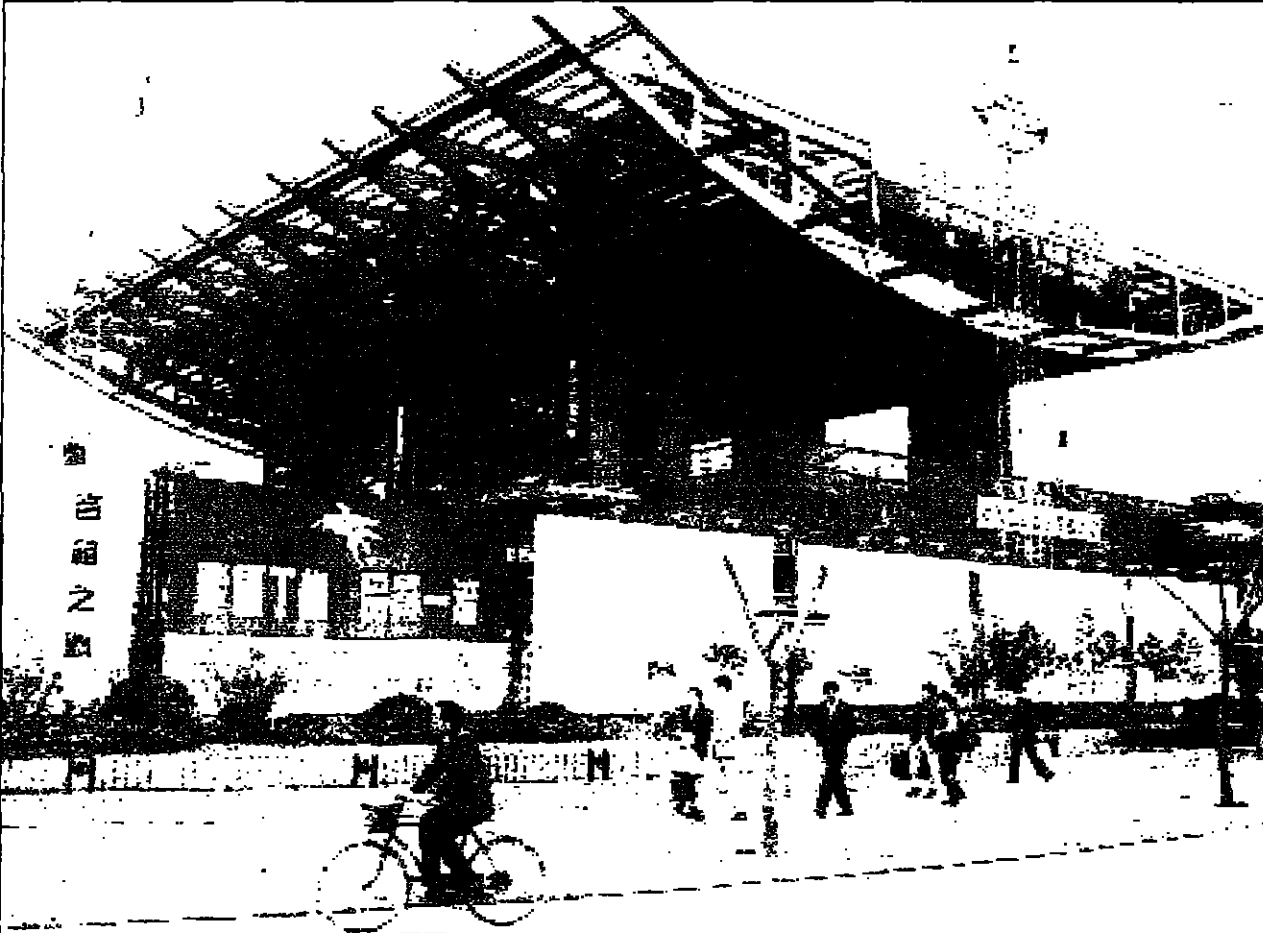
Work on the new building, which features an auditorium of 2,000 seats, began in September 1994 and the building is due to open on Oct. 1, 1998.

The opera house is being built on land that was part of Shanghai's racetrack before the Communist takeover in 1949.

Next door, in what was the race clubhouse, is the Shanghai Library, which is moving next month to a huge new site in the city's southwest.

"Our new building will be a monument and symbol of Shanghai," said Wu Jianzhong, deputy director of the library.

The library will have a floor space of 83,000 square metres, and in terms of volume will be



A cyclist passes the construction of Shanghai's new Opera House, costing \$133 million and is due to be completed in October 1998. It is the most spectacular of the new buildings going up in Shanghai which is eager to regain its status as one of Asia's most important cities (Reuters photo)

one of the 10 largest in the world and the third biggest in Asia, after Beijing and Tokyo, Mr. Wu said.

It aims to serve both the general public and the research community and will also host China's largest gramophone record collection of 140,000 pieces, he said.

All these prestige projects, financed with

local money, reflect Shanghai's desire to make up for the neglect the city suffered during the first 40 years of Communist rule, when most of the wealth it generated as China's top industrial city went to the central government in Beijing.

Shanghai's population has more than doubled since 1949 to over 14 million, but up to the early 1990s almost no-

thing had been done about its deteriorating roads, housing and other public infrastructure.

Things changed after 1990, when the city was given permission to retain more of the money it generates, allowed a national stock market and designated the country's financial capital.

It was also given the

right to sell land for development.

These changes have transformed the city's balance sheet and allowed it to build the kind of grand projects the city government thinks it deserves.

"You cannot evaluate these projects in commercial terms alone," said one Chinese banker. "They are being built for prestige and status."

Beatles biggest sellers in world ...since Beatles

By Paul Majendie
Reuters

LONDON — The Beatles have outsold every pop group in the world this year and sales of more than 20 million albums make them the most successful band since... the Beatles.

Three Anthology volumes of out-takes and live recordings shot to number one in the U.S. charts. The Guinness Book of Records had to rewrite its 1996 entry on the world's most famous group and will have to do so again next year.

"The Beatles in the last 12 months have sold more albums than they ever did in any one year in the sixties," said anthology publicist Geoff Baker.

"The Beatles have beaten the Beatles. That's not hype. It is true," he told Reuters as the third Anthology volume enjoys bumper sales in the run-up to Christmas. It is the 18th number one Beatles album in the United States.

"It is interesting that three guys who stopped recording together in 1970 and one who tragically died in 1980 are now outselling every other artist on the planet," Mr. Baker said.

He quashed rumours that Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr would get together for a "three-ties" golden oldies reunion concert tour.

"That is absolutely not on. Paul said that the thought of anyone filling John's shoes was nonsense," Mr. Baker said. Lennon was shot dead outside his New York apartment in 1980.

The Anthology albums have spawned a new generation of Beatle fans. The band's record label, Apple, says four out of every 10 Beatle albums sold this year have been bought by teenagers who were not even born when the group broke up.

The release of the Anthology albums has also boosted sales of the Beatles back catalogue, record executives say. Gross record sales, TV rights and video sales will earn about \$780 million this year with the lion's share going to British record company EMI.

Oasis, leaders of the 1990s British popular music revival, readily acknowledge that the Beatles are a major influence on them.

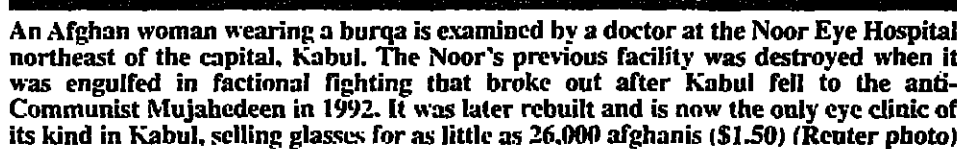
Mr. Baker had great admiration for Oasis but said their 1996 sales were less than half those achieved by the Beatles.

He said the surviving Beatles were "flattered and delighted" by the reception the albums have had.

"Paul always used to say he was pleased not about the fame and the legends but the songs. He and John hoped and intended they would last. They plainly have."



For people like Mohammad Ashoq, it is a price well worth paying. "For a year I have lived off my savings, and now they are almost finished. Without this clinic I would not have been able to go back to work."



"You have to live closely with someone over a long period to get leprosy. You have to eat, drink and sleep with

"It's okay here. They treat me well here. I have no one else left in life. I'll see my days out here," she said.

Department of Diagnostic Radiology where, in collaboration with industry, research projects to develop image analysis and technology in MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) are being carried out — London Press Service.

5. Opossum.
6. True.
7. The Euphrates.
8. 1966.

Last Week's Cryptograms

1. A big woolly reeconn crolli broke into the kitchen and succended in stealing all our sweet sugar cookies.
2. Laughter is a funny thing. We chorlie, chuckle, guffaw, snicker. Often, we laugh until we cry.
3. Most afternoon talk shows: A few participants all prattling at once...like clattering magpies.
4. Wild pilot ends up in coal mine when he mounts rockets backwards on helicopter blades.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. NAZE HP Z DUCT STZWEHOWR PHYL VO
PWDDTC FAYL Z PMZRRUMZEHR SWETCONC
ORWFETCHLY SN ON UUPPT? — By Dianne McInnes
2. INKTEKLLST INCFAS, FAYTHLI XREZS.
NRST RNYS-ZJSS XNRH FA INYS
PHIFFVHCST RNBCSOP ZXAL FATHLI
CYKOS. — By Rita Salazar

the U.N. and all-based refugee agencies to create the optimum settlement policies.

think that there are two

Peace — the whole point is to listen to one another

By Daphne Barak

Kathleen Turner, who became famous in the 1980s as a Hollywood bombshell — is turning to character roles these days. Within this respectable framework, she arrived in the Middle East to explain to one and all that she is in favour of peace. Really for it.

With her raspy voice, sleepy look and skin-tight pantsuit, she came to Tel Aviv where I interviewed her.

Question: Many stars are afraid of being identified politically as they might lose some of their fans.

Answer: I understand, I definitely understand them, but I am not afraid. As a private person, I do have certain commitments. The fact that I am here already makes me a part of what happens in the Middle East. I am not a politician, but as an actress, I am a communicator.

Q: Did you learn the intricacies of the Middle East: who is against whom? Why? How much?

A: Of course! My father was a diplomat, his last post was as United States consul in London. So I have always followed international events; at one point I was very friendly with the Israeli consul in New York (Uri Savir) and his wife.

Q: That does not prove knowledge of the present situation.

A: Correct. And that is why I studied about this area in the last few weeks.

Q: To keep the right balance, you have met with Shimon Peres and other Israeli officials. What about the Arabs?

A: I will be going to Gaza and the West Bank and I will meet there with Palestinian leaders, reliable peo-



Kathleen Turner

ple.

Q: Do you also plan to meet with right-wing Israelis?

A: Believe me, I tried, and really wanted to understand the situation, and to know the entire gamut of opinions, but I haven't had much success in that...

Q: Which Hollywood star has today inherited your "sex-symbol" roles? Is it Sharon Stone, or Julia Roberts, or maybe someone else?

A: No, no, none of them. Look, the entire Hollywood industry has changed. When I began, I was a theatre actress, and suddenly I was offered a reading for a movie role. I had never made a movie before that.

Today, the industry is formed by actresses that are also businesswomen, and very sharp ones at that. It is so different. Also, I am always afraid to mention names because someone could feel hurt. And in any case, I feel I am still too

young to be naming an heir.

Q: How old are you?

A: I'm 42.

Q: Have you already performed your best role?

A: No, no, no, no. Look, there are some roles where I think I performed very well, and then there are those moments when I did not do it so well. But when I look back, I must believe that even at those moments, I still did the best I could.

Q: What is your best performance to date?

A: Crime of Passion" or maybe "Romancing the Stone" — these are the ones I most enjoyed.

Q: At one time you declared: "A man must be either gay or blind if he does not turn to look at me." Do you still feel that way?

A: On certain nights, I do still feel that way, yes.

Q: When you were a little girl, what did you want to be?

A: An actress, always an

actress. But it took me some time to understand that you could make a living out of it.

Q: Who has been your most perfect partner?

A: I have had many good partners: Michael Douglas was very powerful, but it is clear that Jack Nicholson is the most talented of all; but on the other hand, I also was a pretty good partner!

Q: You have complained more than once about women's roles in Hollywood.

A: That is so true. I get a lot of scripts, some of which never materialise, never get to the screen, but in most of them, if you were to cut out the woman's role, the script would not drastically change... usually, the woman is "his wife," "his lover," "his girlfriend," no more than a body.

Q: Being that you are on a "political mission," who did you support in the last American elections?

A: Clinton. I have always supported him, and now I am celebrating. I campaigned for him, raised funds. Bob Dole — is just too old. I prefer looking at my daughter and at my son to looking back.

Q: You are now here in Israel. What about a visit to the Arab countries?

A: Oh definitely. I'm waiting for an invitation. The whole point is to listen to one another. After all, we are all humans and must express our own personalities. It is not a question of religion or belief or territories. First of all, it is a question of communication between people.

I always tend to look for what people have in common, before seeing what divides them. Oh, what a heavy weight you have placed on my shoulders.

By Ghislaine Kruit and Fons Tuinstra

Economic advisers are warning Japanese politicians of dire financial consequences unless financial reform of old people's health care and pensions is tackled swiftly.

Many countries are wrestling with the growing difficulties of maintaining senior citizens' welfare. But the problem is particularly acute in Japan, weighed down by a huge government debt burden and a shrinking tax base as its elderly population expands faster than anywhere else on Earth.

Neighbouring China also faces a massive financial strain next century as baby-boomers — born during the time of Chairman Mao's now-discredited population-growth policy — approach retirement.

In Japan, the elderly population grew by 25 per cent in the first half of this decade to 18.23 million. This compares with the next highest growth rate of 17.7 per cent in Sweden. By 2025, it is forecast, one in four Japanese will be aged over 65.

The financial implications are grim. Yet there are fears that the issue is being allowed to drift — snagged by red tape in the powerful bureaucracy and stalled by politicians' fears of taking unpopular decisions that might upset voters.

Old people and those caring for them are already complaining of insufficient funding to make ends meet in one of the world's most expensive countries.

The cost of maintaining this ageing population could prove devastating to the nation, according to a commentary in the Japan Times newspaper, which

warned of the dangers of "either massive tax increases or deficit spending" of staggering proportions.

To prevent the worst, say economists, restructuring of the system must start now.

After several years of economic stagnation, the country is already lumbering under a huge financial burden, with long-term government debt forecast to reach 320,000 yen — or 64 per cent of gross domestic product — by next year.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto instructed ministers earlier this year to thrash out proposals to tackle the problem.

Economic advisers say the 1997 budget, due in December, must also specifically address the problems of financing old people's health care and pensions, both currently paid for out of income tax.

Earlier this year, government officials drew up proposals to reform state health insurance, including new premiums to be paid by workers aged over 40, restrictions on the provision of health benefits to people under 65, and even a 20 per cent levy for over-70s' medical care.

Amid widespread criticism of the proposals, parliament hesitated, and had not made a decision by the time it was dissolved in late September.

Meanwhile, pension officials have given warning that the proportion of wages that workers contribute towards old-age benefit will have to increase from the current 8.3 per cent to a whopping 34.8 per cent by 2025 to maintain the value of payments. This percentage could be trimmed to 29.8 if all payments were suspended until workers reach 65.

compared with 60 for some benefits at present.

To reduce this premium further, say officials, pensions might have to be cut or workers' generous annual bonuses — often two months' pay — heavily taxed.

These warnings were made in 1994, and since then, a falling birth rate has exacerbated the problem.

Premier Hashimoto acknowledged the scale of the problem: "People are living longer than in the past. We have to establish social security and a social welfare system before it becomes too late."

Tetsuya Aman, a senior economic official at the Health and Welfare Ministry, says: "The government is aware that in the future there will be more people receiving old-age benefits than those paying for them, and each department is giving it much consideration in order to make a new fiscal structure convenient for everybody."

However, the 1994 pension recommendations were considered "rather drastic," but were still "under consideration."

Across the East China Sea, the consequences of Mao Zedong's baby-boom policy — long discarded for strict population control — are looming in Chinese cities such as Shanghai, where officials estimate they need to raise 60 million yuan to guarantee old folk a meagre basic pension over the next 30 years.

Senior economist Wang Ju of the Shanghai Social Security Bureau says the big port city is leading the way in pension reforms in China.

While most rural Chinese still have no official pension provision, the former urban system, under which

pensioners were cared for by their old workplace, led to great inequalities and financial strain on enterprises, particularly since the advent of competitive market forces.

Four years ago, a local fund was launched in Shanghai to relieve this burden while boosting labour mobility by enabling workers to take their pensions with them if they swapped jobs. Other cities are now following suit.

The Shanghai fund currently needs government help to pay 1.8 million pensioners up to 500 yuan per month. After the year 2000, the fund is supposed to become self-sufficient. But, because of the demographic time-bomb, a huge financial gap will have to be plugged to maintain the value of payments.

"Until 2012, the situation will remain quite stable," says Wang, "and after 2025 it will again become stable, but in between we will hit a peak."

One suggested method of raising the extra billions is gradually to increase workers' contributions to the fund from the current three per cent of salary to eight per cent. Employers already pay in 25 per cent of their wages bill.

However, the fund's prospects of meeting the required targets are threatened by high inflation and a shortage of actuarial experience on sound investment. Inflation hit 17.8 per cent in Shanghai last year, while the pension fund received only 17.3 per cent interest on savings.

Ghislaine Kruit is a Dutch journalist who writes and edits for the Japan Times in Tokyo. Fons Tuinstra is a Dutch journalist based in Shanghai. This article is reprinted from the Gemini News Service.

Studying refugee problems to create better resettlement policies

By Michael Boyd

THE OFTEN vacant stare in the face of a refugee has become an all too-familiar media image in the latter half of the 20th century. Despite its prevalence, it is a subject that we as yet know very little about and even less of how to deal with it humanely and effectively.

"Refugees are just ordinary people from whom extraordinary and often uncontrollable forces have stripped away the essential building blocks of everyday behaviour," says Dr. Vaughan Robinson, a human geographer based in Britain.

"I am talking about ethnic and class allegiance, learned skills, national identity and personal goals. These are things which we take for granted and are common to all peoples of the world, but refugees have had most of them taken away."

To understand these forces and the effects they have on refugees, Dr. Robinson set up the Migration Unit within the department of geography at the University of Wales, Swansea, four years ago. In this short period it has already established itself as one of the leading centres in the world.

Now consisting of 11 researchers, with access to multi-disciplinary consultants, it carries out long-term in-depth interviews with displaced peoples to monitor and evaluate their needs.

It then uses this data to advise the British government, the U.N. and all U.K.-based refugee agencies to create the optimum resettlement policies.

"I think that there are two

key words which summarise the refugees experience — these are 'loss' and 'not knowing,'" says Dr. Robinson. "Initially, people often experience loss of control over their own destiny and see other people directing their lives for them. They have lost the important, fixed reference points in their life, such as their home, family and jobs. All this comes about very quickly as the direct result of being uprooted from one location to another."

over their own destiny and become independent again often through self-employment. A good example of this in practice is the resettlement of the Ugandans in the U.K.

Then there is the desire of ensuring that children are less vulnerable through a good education. Third, there is the search for security and the need to live with people who have shared the same experience, which often results in the recreation of old social networks in a new environment.

ty of whether they have actually improved their situation by flight in the first place.

"At this stage we also see apathy, institutionalisation or dependence. We have to remember that in reception camps the food is provided, the life style is very regimented and decisions are taken out of their hands."

There is a fourth period when they move from the camps to be resettled often in a new country. This triggers a second period of euphoria but again is soon

Vietnamese boat people who arrived in the U.K. from 1979. They were dispersed across the country in clusters of between four and ten families.

Subsequent data demonstrated that the Vietnamese themselves would have preferred larger clusters in a smaller number of localities so they could recreate their own social networks. This was borne out by that within 12 months about 50 per cent of the Vietnamese that resettled in small hamlets had migrated to cities like London and Birmingham (in the English midlands).

It was realised for the first time that the critical mass of the resettlement clusters was all important. So the U.K. government amended its policies when dealing with refugees from Bosnia some years later.

"As a direct result of our research they were able to put in place a successful policy based on concentration rather than dispersal of resettlement clusters," says Dr. Robinson. "In this work I have to continually remind myself that the government departments, who are actually going to decide the fate of these people's lives, need to formulate their policy on the basis of hard information from objective research which we are learning to provide."

"Emotional advocacy rarely changes these policies successfully. Having said that, I think that it is of the greatest importance that research in this field never regards people simply as numbers or statistics but always remembers that these are people who have experienced great trauma in their lives."

London Press Service

Crackdown on wildlife trade launched at Cambodian restaurants

By Robin McDowell
The Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The menu at the Fook Lum Moon wildlife and seafood restaurant is changing — the specialty items no longer include such delicacies as soft-nosed turtles, snakes and rare scaly anteaters known as pangolins.

The restaurant was one of several in Phnom Penh visited recently by a municipal agency that protects animal resources.

Officials seized rare animals destined for dinner and warned the owners they faced fines of up to 925,000 riels (\$ 370), or even jail.

The restaurants were targeted in a campaign to curb Cambodia's trade in endangered species. While dining on wildlife poses only a minor threat to Cambodia's remaining fauna, conservationists see the crackdown as crucial for the government's plan to next year join the convention on international trade in endangered species.

"If we don't act now to protect the animals, especially rare species, soon there will be none left," said Sabu Bachar, under-secretary of the environment ministry.

Cambodia's wildlife is threatened by a boom in domestic and international trade. Poor enforcement of laws against hunting and trading, rampant deforestation and millions of land mines left from decades of civil war are also serious dangers.

One of the largest wildlife trade monitoring

programmes, traffic, estimated recently that Cambodia still has 123 species of mammals, 82 of reptiles, 28 of amphibians, 429 of birds and at least 215 of freshwater fish.

Endangered species still found in the country's dense but rapidly dwindling forests are the kouprey (a jungle cow), the guar (a large wild ox), the pileated gibbon, corbett tigers and Asian elephants.

Street 166 in Phnom Penh is lined with several shops selling gaur skulls, tiger teeth, ivory and antlers. In one, which often has tiger skins for sale, the coats of two clouded leopards are pinned to the wall. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature lists the leopard as "vulnerable" to extinction.

Trade also flourishes in several provincial markets, including the border town of Poipet near Thailand.

"One of the largest assortments of wildlife products to be found in southeast Asia was discovered at Poipet's covered market, including products from some of the most endangered animals in the region," the group wrote in a recent report.

The good news: the presence of wildlife parts and skins in local markets seems to be on the decline, said David Ashwell of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Vendors are apparently shifting toward traditional medicines made of plants.

As result, it's getting harder to find elephant skin used as acne cure, monkey head for headaches, tiger

bone for rheumatism, and tortoise head for tonic after childbirth.

But the greater pressure may come from international trade, which appears to be rising.

Much Cambodian wildlife ends up in Vietnamese markets or is sold in Thailand. Growing affluence in China, where rare species are used for traditional medicine, represents a time bomb.

A new threat comes from the large-scale timber concessions that invariably push existing wildlife deeper into the forests, said Lic Vuthy of the Agriculture Ministry's Forestry Department.

Current laws ban hunting wild animals in Cambodia, but enforcement is haphazard. And as experience in many African countries has shown, the material rewards of poaching and trading for poor people are often irresistible.

Peasants in the impoverished countryside live on as little as 2,500 riels (\$ 1) per day.

A better life can be had by poaching and trading in animals. On street 166, retail prices per kilogramme for elephant skin is 15,000 riels (\$ 6); tiger bone, 250,000 riels (\$ 100); and sun bear bile, a fever treatment, 2.5 million riels (\$ 1,000).

The cages and aquariums at restaurants like Fook Lum Moon's may now be empty. But with tasty dishes like pangolin fetching 7,500 riels (\$ 3) per plate, conservationists fear that the anteaters won't be off the dinner table for long.

Britain to launch initiative for global free trade

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has given every sign of being committed to trade liberalisation that would help its objective of export-oriented economic growth and Britain expects the Kingdom's support for a British initiative for global free trade by the year 2020, a British diplomat said Wednesday.

Roger Sykes, commercial secretary at the British embassy here, said his country planned to launch the initiative at the first ministerial conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in Singapore next month.

"It is an important initiative," said Mr. Sykes, noting that it would call for "comprehensive negotiations on telecommunications and financial service (areas that were not addressed in the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations that led to the WTO), an action programme on intellectual property rights, and on opening markets for barrier-free trade."

In the next two years, the British government will follow up the initiative at all levels with international organisations

such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It will also use its presidency of the European Union in the second half of 1997 to propagate the initiative, said Mr. Sykes.

The British diplomat noted that Jordan had launched negotiations to enter the WTO and that accession to WTO and acceptance of the concept of global free trade would be beneficial to the Kingdom's efforts to become a self-reliant and achieve realistic economic growth.

Given the small size of the Jordanian market, the Kingdom has no option but to focus on exports to develop its economy and this would be possible only if it accepts reciprocal barrier-free trade, Mr. Sykes noted.

"We have seen a firm commitment on the part of the government to economic liberalisation," he said, conceding, however, that the government did indeed face short-term problems in translating that commitment into concrete action.

That was an implicit reference to pressure groups within the country against accepting barrier-free

trade. They argue that such an arrangement will be detrimental to local industry by opening up the market for foreign products.

Mr. Sykes noted that Jordan's entry to the WTO would have short-term "negative" impact on the local scene, but said that it would be a small sacrifice when compared with the long-term benefits to the economy.

He quoted from a "white paper" issued by the British government that "changes in technology and communications mean that markets increasingly operate on a global scale. Countries that try to cut themselves off from this process will lose out."

"Nobody should be frightened of free trade and open market," said the paper. "There is increasing openness to inward investment. Most countries actively promote it."

Following are major excerpts from the document:

1) There is no evidence that imports from countries with lower labour costs cause an increase in the rate of unemployment. In Europe the real cause has been labour market inflexibilities — and that

is why Britain has opted out of the Social Chapter in the Treaty on European Union.

2) Protectionism is no answer. It is ineffective in tackling the real need which is for adaptation to stay competitive.

3) Protecting an uncompetitive industry "saves jobs" only to the extent that they depend solely on the domestic market, and only for so long as they remain immune from changes in technology and consumer taste. In the meantime, the policy of protection imposes heavy costs — for instance on other, competitive industries operating in the same country, not least because they face the threat of retaliation against their exports.

It is foolish to suggest that developed countries should not trade with developing economies. As they grow in prosperity, so does their capacity to buy from us. Why should we cut ourselves off from growing export opportunities?

4) The great merit of free trade and open markets is that it is an inclusive policy. Every country gains. That is Britain's vision as we move towards 2020.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates		Prices as at 20/11/96 19:45	
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP
US Dollar	1.4858	0.5903	1.2531
DE Mark	0.6685	0.3861	0.8448
GB Sterling	1.8770	2.5092	0.7917
CH Franc	0.7917	1.1819	0.4709
JP Yen	0.0090	1.3449	0.5357
CA Dollar	0.7452	1.1181	0.4458
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9894	0.3982
NL Guilder	0.5864	0.3122	0.2549
FR Franc	0.1977	0.2955	0.1177

Energy	
Commodity	Price
Brent	24.00
W. Texas	24.80
Bony	24.00
Dubai	21.45
UL Gas	217.00

Metal Prices	
Metal	Price
Gold (oz's)	379
Silver (oz's)	4.95
Platinum (oz's)	383.75
AL (3 Months)	1495
CU (3 Months)	2197
Zinc (3 Months)	1071
Lead (3 Months)	0
NI (3 Months)	8840

Energy	
Commodity	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	120.92
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1378
Sugar (\$/ton)	311
Wheat (\$/ton)	132
Soya (c/lbs)	21.85
Tea (kg/kg)	118
Barley (\$/bsh)	2.18
Rice (\$/ton)	470

Mid-East Currencies	
Currency	Price
SA Riyal	0.2668
AE Dirham	0.2724
KW Dinar	3.3548
BH Dinar	0.3770
CY Pound	2.1933

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)	
Currency	Rate
USD	5.26
GBP	5.95
JPY	0.35
DEM	3.00
FRF	3.29
CHF	1.68
ITL	7.35

JOD Cross Rates	
Currency	Rate
US Dollar	0.708
GB Sterling	1.1864
DE Mark	0.4703
CH Franc	0.5558
FR Franc	0.1391
JP Yen	0.6349
NL Guilder	0.4193
IT Lira	0.4891

Israel budget crisis looms

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Finance Minister Dan Meridor has warned Israel's parliament that he may demand total budget cuts for next year of \$2.1 billion, \$600 million more than outlined in a draft spending plan, submitted earlier this month, Israel media reported Wednesday.

Public radio and newspapers quoted Mr. Meridor as telling the Knesset finance committee Tuesday that due to the economic slowdown, revenues for 1997 are likely to fall \$600 million short of earlier forecasts.

"I'm not sure of the exact figures ... but I have no doubt there is a need for this additional cut" in

order for the government to achieve its target of reducing the budget deficit to 2.8 per cent of gross domestic product next year, he was quoted as saying.

Even before the additional reductions, the government's draft budget for 1997 has already come under sharp attack in the Knesset from both opposition deputies and members of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing coalition.

While the draft budget was narrowly approved on first reading earlier this month, the Knesset finance committee has yet to approve a single individual chapter in the plan, which calls for spending of \$60

billion. Opposition deputies and moderates in the ruling coalition notably object to deep cuts foreseen in social programmes and state guaranteed medical coverage as well as in the defence budget.

Mr. Meridor was scheduled to discuss the budget problems later Wednesday with Mr. Netanyahu.

The two men have warned repeatedly that painful budget cuts next year are the only way to get the economy back on track after a sharp drop in first reading earlier this year.

Government figures indicate the economy was growing by only 3.5 per cent this year compared to seven per cent last year.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1996

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Handle outside affairs today and then study into gaining your fondest ambitions. Use tact with your friends so there won't be any difficulty developing. Later this evening you can meet with a bigwig and discuss your ideas.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't commit yourself today to anything without sufficient thought, so you won't make a fool of yourself and look bad in the eyes of those in authority. Use diplomacy with a new contact and make the time together productive.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Be direct in stating your ideas today to a clever and entertain any suggestions which he or she will make. Learn to handle a worldly affair wisely, so that you will be able to make your career activities very successful.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You

can get an early start today on your career activities and make the best effort of your abilities to get any assignment completed on time. Come to a better agreement with a fellow associate and discuss your options.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Get your finest talent working today to your satisfaction and make your efforts pay off in more financial means. Plan your amusements wisely later this evening, however, avoid anyone who is strange and not willing to assist.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Listen to the views of loved ones today and coordinate them with your own, so that you will be on the same wavelength. Don't take any risks this evening with your reputation or you could be in a difficult situation.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Have meetings

with fellow associates today and you can accomplish much towards being quite successful. Handle correspondence wise, so that you will gain recognition from a bigwig who can increase your level of prosperity.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Use good judgement today concerning money or property, so that you can build a larger nest egg for the days ahead. Don't visit anyone later this evening you are not sure about or there could develop a difficult situation.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be positive and confident today in going after what you want more and you will discover that what you seek can be just around the corner. An advisor may not give the right advice, so be cautious in proceeding any further.

CAPRICORN: (Decem-

ber 22 to January 20) You find the right way to put your business ideas across today, so consult with a knowledgeable person and make your theories prosper. Buy a nice gift for your mate and he or she will be very touched by your kindness.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Gain the personal desire today which means much to you and thereby you can seek the advice of a knowledgeable person. Tonight be very gentle and kind with the one you love and there could be quite a lot of affection.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Anything you want to do of a practical nature should be done today, so that won't be any delays in your progress. A bigwig comes through with a favour which is well received by your fellow associates and put into operation.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Study your position today in the business world and do whatever will improve it and make your career activities quite successful. Contact bigwigs later this evening who can help you to complete a new project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Use better methods today which will help you to understand how to expand through opportunities around you. Later this evening you can go out on the town with close friends and have a wonderful time together.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Study into periodicals and newspaper articles today which will help you in adding more assets to your present abundance. Later this evening you can meet with fellow associates and decide upon the best course of action.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be with more worldly persons today who can assist you with career activities you are currently involved with. Carry through with public tasks you have in mind and thereby you can gain the prestige and success you desire.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Enjoy being of service to others today and you will gain the prestige and appreciation of civic and community leaders. Make sure that your own affairs do not suffer in the interim or you could find yourself in a difficult situation.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Plan the amusements today you like for the days ahead and spend them with close friends and your loved ones. Don't waste a moment of your valuable time with career activities and you can proceed very successfully.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is a fine day today to get your home in finest order in anticipation of unexpected guest, so make every effort to improve it. Have some worthwhile guest in who can be of assistance in the days ahead for your success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Plan how today to utilise your time to a greater advantage during the days ahead, so that you can make great strides toward being successful. Talk this plan of action over with fellow associates who have good suggestions.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Plan how today to gain more assets and make your nest egg more developed. Study your newspaper and other periodicals thoroughly for good ideas. It's full speed ahead at this time so proceed in a successful manner.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can use that fine talent today for organising everything around you and gain more assets in the process. Later this evening will be good for discussing with a knowledgeable person the ideas you have for career activities.

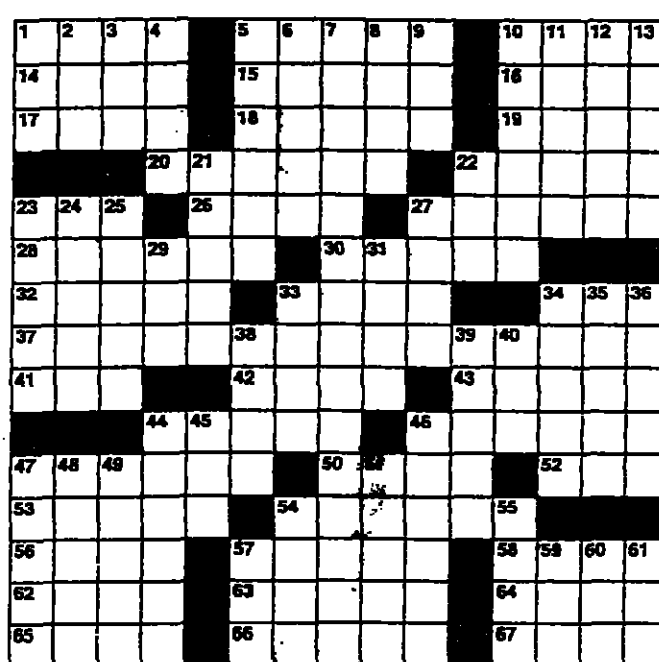
AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Although you are an idealist you had better concentrate on the practical today, so that you will gain recognition from those in authority. Later this evening you can go to a romantic location with your mate and have a pleasant time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Learn a great deal today about whatever can bring greater progress into your life and that of your loved ones. An older person can give you wise advice later this evening, so listen carefully to what is being discussed.

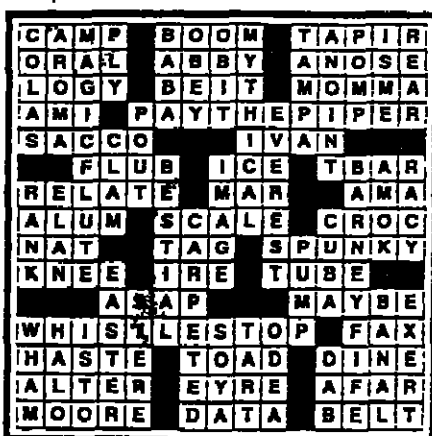
Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's

THE Daily Crossword by Diane C. Baldwin

- ACROSS**
- Brief quarrel
 - Pine Tree State
 - Water vapor
 - Plant of the mustard family
 - Radii kin
 - Pelvic bones
 - Holly
 - Tenth part
 - Go under
 - Poultry parts
 - Serenity
 - Portuguese title
 - Green Gables girl
 - Horticulture site
 - On edge
 - Very cautious
 - In the — (at all)
 - One-horse carriage
 - Legume
 - Where a critical decision is made
 - Affectedly modest
 - Hasty
 - Total
 - up (devises)
 - Fencing position
 - Aromatic resin
 - Chops
 - Poetic contraction
 - Referred to
 - Heads down the runway
 - Church tribunal
 - Certain religious believer
 - Greet warmly
 - One growing old
 - Haggard
 - Wheel holder
 - Sister of Lazarus
 - Annoying fellows
 - Thaw

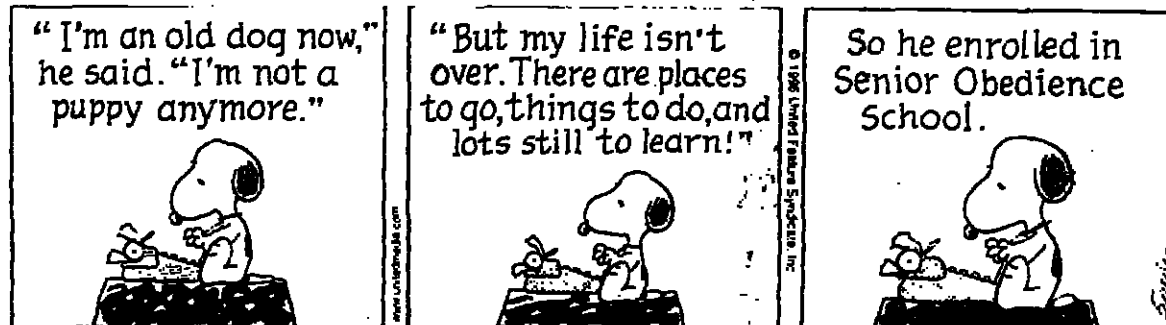


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- DOWN**
- Slalom
 - Buddy
 - Brew
 - Printed version of a speech
 - High seas crime
 - Straighten
 - Targeted, in a way
 - Slangy negatives
 - Vane dir.
 - Distress
 - Horner's epic
 - From then on
 - Reserved
 - Celerity
 - Golf norm
 - Ford —, WI
 - a customer
 - Substantial
 - Empty spaces
 - Fire remains
 - Hodgepodge
 - Trolley car
 - Chaplain
 - Bring out
 - Go away!
 - Basic point
 - Salary hike
 - Keats work
 - Dismal
 - Wonderful
 - Colts about
 - Elec. meas.
 - Woodsmen's tool
 - Alfing
 - Permit

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Business
Murad
Pakistan
trade dele

(Petra) —
President Haidar
the Pakistani
delegation which
visit to Jordan
Jordanian busi-
ness and industrialists.
Murad stressed the
keenness in
trade relations in
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Real estate company
to issue JD 10 m o

THE JORDAN Mortgage Refinancing
company has announced that it will
issue JD 10 million of debentures
for the first time in its history.
The company's board chairman
said the company is one of the
most successful in the country.
The company has been operating
since 1995 and 1996, the value
of the debentures is estimated at
JD 10 million. The company has
been successful in its operations
and has a good reputation in the
country.

General Manager Zuhair
will lead the company's JD 10
million of debentures to the
country. He estimated the annual
income of the company at JD 10
million. The company has been
operating since 1995 and 1996,
the value of the debentures is
estimated at JD 10 million.

THE BETTER HALF.
GENDER-GEN
Stanley and I often
to communicate with
even when we're in t

JUMBLE
THAT
Jumble: WHEEL AD
Answer: The result of
dice for many

Murad meets Pakistani trade delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman Chamber of Commerce President Haidar Murad Wednesday received at his office the Pakistani trade delegation which is currently on visit to Jordan to seek scopes of cooperation with Jordanian businessmen and industrialists.

Mr. Murad stressed the Jordanian keenness to develop trade relations in all fields with Pakistan.

He called for increasing the volume of trade exchange between the two countries and removing all obstacles that hinder exchanging of goods.

Mr. Murad reiterated the need to establish a joint Islamic market to benefit all Islamic states under the umbrella of the Islamic

French team prepares for AFM modernisation project

AMMAN (J.T.) — A delegation representing Paris Bourse and Sicovam SA (the depository and settlement) is on a two-week visit to Jordan to follow up on the implementation of the technical assistance project signed between Paris Bourse and Sicovam SA on one hand and the Amman Financial Market (AFM) on the other hand. The total cost of the project is 10.5 million French francs.

Wahib Shaer, director-general of the AFM met the delegation Wednesday and reviewed with them the work methodology to ensure the success of the project.

The project is within the framework of the technical cooperation programme and financed by a grant from the French government to Jordan under the 1996 protocol between Jordan and France.

The project will be carried out in three successive phases. The first phase consists of

Asia warned of labour crunch

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Asia has been warned that a "mismatch" between labour supply and demand may threaten the region's competitive edge and send investors scurrying elsewhere.

The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), which sounded the warning after polling 223 expatriate managers of foreign companies, picked the Philippines as an exception to the general trend.

"It is not simply a matter of trying to hold down labour turnover while preventing wage bills from rising faster than productivity," said a report by PERC.

"In many cases, it is more a matter of being able to find people in sufficient numbers possessing the required skills," said the Hong Kong-based consultancy.

Asia, facing a cyclical downturn in business, was held out little hope of relief on the labour front due to what the report called "mismatch of supply and demand."

Plentiful and cheap labour has been thought to be one of Asia's advantages in world trade and a premier draw card for foreign

investments. But the PERC survey held this notion up to be a myth.

Turnover rates for managerial and technical staff in Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea have been running at double digits for years while wages have climbed so high that companies have been forced to shift to cheaper locations.

"However even in countries like China and Thailand, where one would think the supply of labour is more than adequate, people with certain specific skills are simply not there in sufficient numbers to meet current demand levels," the report lamented.

A shortage of engineers and skilled technicians is the problem in Thailand. In China, a lack of enough skilled manpower in the south had prompted foreign investors to shift further north and inland.

Companies involved in businesses such as chemicals, power, telecommunications and high-tech electronics were finding Asia "an extremely expensive place in which to operate."

"Cheap labour has lost its allure. They are investing because this is where they

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Real estate company authorised to issue JD 10 m of debentures

** THE JORDAN Mortgage Refinancing Company (JMRC) was authorised by its general assembly to issue debentures worth JD10 million, double the company's JD5 million registered capital, at any time without having to refer to the general assembly for approval. The general assembly also amended the company's articles of association and the internal regulations to allow expanding the number of the board of directors from nine to eleven, three of whom to represent the Central Bank and two to represent the official public institution.

The issuance of JD10 million of debentures was conditioned on the approval of the "issuance committee," as the companies' law states that no company can issue debentures in excess of its capital. The company's board chairman Michael Marto, who is also deputy governor of the Central Bank, considered this limit in the companies' law as one of the factors which has contributed to the weak market of debentures in the Kingdom.

Only JD26 million of debentures were issued in 1995 and all of them were development bonds issued by the government. Also during the first nine months of this year, the only debentures were the JD28 million of development bonds issued by the government. Although no debentures were issued by any company in 1995 and 1996, the value of the debentures to be issued by the Jordan Mortgage Refinancing Company would represent 18.9 per cent of the total JD148.2 million of new bonds and shares issued during the first nine months of this year.

JMRC General Manager Zuhair Khalifeh said the government will relend the company a JD13.5 million loan extended to the Kingdom by the World Bank to finance housing projects in the country. He estimated the annual real estate lending to be about JD200 million. Deputy chairman Yousef Hiyasat expected the JMRC to have a volume of work amounting to JD200 million during the coming three years. Mr. Hiyasat estimated the annual investment in the real estate market to be around JD500 million.

The Central Bank of Jordan has a JD900,000 stake, which represents an 18 per cent equity, in the company. Other main shareholders are the Arab Bank and the General Housing and Urban Development Corporation (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq).

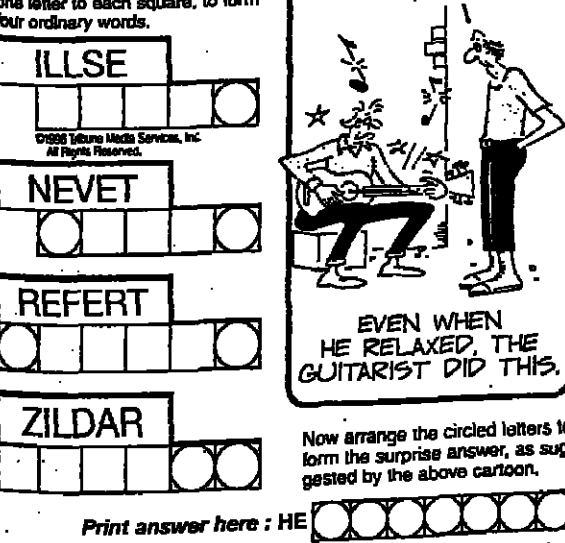
THE BETTER HALF.



"Stanley and I often use e-mail to communicate with each other—even when we're in the same room."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: HE (Answers Monday)

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKH SAJI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 20/11/1996											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
252,000	205,000	ARAB BANK	13.4	1.43	2	40	9820	245.00	245.50	50+	
1,250	880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	69.6	0.00	5	3500	3698	1.06	1.06	-	
2,700	2,120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.0	6.33	2	2000	4400	2.20	2.20	-	
5,250	4,250	THE HOUSING BK.	12.8	2.89	1	2000	9540	4.77	4.77	-	
3,040	2,450	JOR. INVEST. BK.	18.1	0.74	5	747	1864	2.50	2.50	-	
1,200	880	JOR. CUP. BANK	5.5	7.61	18	76100	69217	.91	.92	01+	
4,180	3,300	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.4	0.00	9	4405	15990	3.63	3.63	-	
3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FUND BANK	17.5	0.00	2	208	997	2.20	2.24	04+	
1,590	1,000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	8	10200	13068	1.25	1.30	05+	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 187.83	CHNG: +0.22	52	99300	128593	
4,550	4,000	JERUSALEM INSUR.	12.0	4.55	2	180	792	4.50	4.40	10-	
2,910	1,840	JOR. FRANCH. INSUR.	5.2	10.81	5	1050	1933	1.84	1.85	01+	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 117.95	CHNG: -0.20	7	1230	2725	
1,900	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.8	7.74	15	7150	11132	1.56	1.55	01-	
1,960	1,080	JOR. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	3	1000	1120	1.11	1.12	01+	
1,050	870	REAL ESTATE INV.	20.2	4.10	1	5000	4550	.87	.91	04+	
1,280	890	JORDAN EXPL. TRAD.	30.3	0.00	3	1000	890	.82	.89	03+	
3,660	3,130	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	13.8	5.75	8	2150	8852	3.44	3.48	04+	
2,270	1,960	SARNA EDUCATION	9	0.00	3	1500	1553	1.02	1.05	03+	
2,430	1,690	UNIFIED CO.	8	5.88	5	1150	1946	1.69	1.70	01+	
1,200	820	UNION BANK INV.	7	0.00	1	600	516	.86	.86	01+	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 107.50	CHNG: +0.44	39	19950	30248	
25,620	18,950	JOR. TOBACCO & CIG.	16.7	3.61	1	30	623	20.48	20.75	27+	
3,770	3,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.5	3.10	7	1022	3302	3.23	3.23	-	
5,960	4,780	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.3	3.51	1	200	1140	5.67	5.70	03+	
10,550	8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.3	0.00	3	850	776	3.44	3.48	04+	
1,590	1,150	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	53.7	0.00	1	200	242	1.16	1.21	05+	
4,870	3,050	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	17.4	6.33	14	3764	11767	3.07	3.16	09+	
6,450	5,650	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.6	4.10	2	15100	92110	6.00	6.10	10+	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 109.84	CHNG: +0.36	222	173554	257369	
GRAND TOTAL						INDEX: 146.76	CHNG: +0.28	320	294034	418934	
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 20/11/1996											
N	800	510	JOR. TRADE PNC.	13.9	0.00	1	500	260	.52	.52	-
N	950	440	KATL. CORNER CENTERS	9	0.00	19	24500	12288	.50	.50	-
N	930	700	UNION INV. 501	67.0	0.00	1	8000	400	.70	.70	-
N	1,110	400	ARAB INV. INVEST.	9	0.00	22	18500	7601	.42	.42	01-
N	950	690	AL-HAMLIYAH 751	15.8	0.00	1	17000	7650	.71	.70	01-
N	640	340	JOR. INDUS. MACHS-JORDO	9	0.00	4	13750	4930	.35	.36	01+
N	1860	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	1	548	325	.52	.52	01+
N	1,760	1,310	KATL. - CHURCH	9	0.00	1	1000	1300	1.31	1.30	01-
N	1,000	520	KATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	2	500	290	.58	.58	-
N	1,100	430	KATL. MOLT. BNG. MANZOO	9	0.00	23	19250	8365	.44	.44	-
N	1,080	750	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	1	2550	1913	.75	.75	-
N	780	430	ARAB ELECT. INDUS.	9	0.00	2	1046	501	.48	.48	-
N	1,330	1,020	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	2	550	435	1.03	1.04	01+
N	840	380	KATL. WASH. 551	9	0.00	1	1000	330	.58	.58	-
N	830	400	INDUS. ENG.	24.6	0.00	7	6500	2620	.41	.40	01-
N	950	800	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	57.6	0.00	2	1200	984	.80	.82	02+
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UEFA Cup

Inter take huge step into quarters

LONDON (R) — Italian League leaders Internazionale Milan virtually guaranteed themselves a place in the quarterfinals of the UEFA Cup when they crushed Boavista of Portugal 5-1 in the first leg of their third round tie on Tuesday.

Two goals each from Ciriaco Sforza and Maurizio Ganz and one from Jocelyn Angoloma gave Inter their impressive win which was achieved without their suspended England international midfielder Paul Ince.

Boavista scored once through Jimmy after an hour but that goal is unlikely to be enough to help them turn the tide in the second leg in two weeks. The Portuguese did themselves no favours when defender Pedro Emanuel was sent off for a second bookable offence after 48 minutes.

Inter, who along with Newcastle are joint favourites to win the trophy, raced into a 2-0 lead inside 13 minutes with goals from Sforza and Angoloma and were never seriously troubled after that as they bid for their third UEFA Cup triumph in seven seasons. Newcastle, the English League leaders, seeking their first silverware since 1969 when they won the old Inter Cities Fairs Cup, were held to a 1-1 draw at Metz in France.

The evergreen Peter Beardsley, now 35, who scored his 200th league goal on Saturday, put Newcastle ahead from the penalty spot after 32 minutes when Metz keeper Lionel Letizi hauled down Newcastle's Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla.

Metz equalised through Amara Traore midway through the second half



John Faxe Jensen (L) and Bo Hansen (R) from Danish soccer club Brøndby fight for the ball with Thorsten Fink of German club Karlsruhe SC during their third round first leg soccer match of the UEFA cup in Copenhagen. Karlsruhe won the match 3-1 (Reuters photo)

after Newcastle's Czech goalkeeper Pavel Srnec totally misjudged a cross from his right, flapped at the ball, and was powerless to stop Traore's back-header looping over his head into the net.

While Metz were held to a draw in France, their French League rivals Monaco scored a comprehensive 3-0 win over Hamburg with all three goals coming after the break.

Monaco, sluggish throughout a dull first half, then took control and scored through Sonny Anderson after 48 minutes, Nigerian Victor Ikpeba (70) and Patrick Blondeau six minutes later.

Schalke of Germany also lost, beaten 2-1 in Belgium by club Brugge, but their

Bundesliga rivals Karlsruhe scored a notable 3-1 win over Brøndby in Denmark.

Thomas Haessler scored twice and South African-born Sean Dundee once against the Danes, who looked impressive in beating Aberdeen in the last round but had to rely on a consolation 89th minute goal from Ruben Bagger which gives them some slight hope for the return. It was Brøndby's first home defeat in 17 UEFA Cup matches.

Luis Aragones, the beleaguered manager of Valencia, received a big boost when his side beat Turkey's Besiktas 3-1 but Besiktas wasted several chances.

Most of the action came in a hectic opening half which

saw Valencia take a quick 2-0 lead, which Besiktas then halved before having Sinan Demircioglu sent off seven minutes before halftime after picking up his second yellow card.

Valencia wrapped it up through Francisco Ferreira eight minutes from time but face a torrid trip to Turkey in two weeks time.

Helsingborg and Anderlecht failed to produce a goal between them but their fans managed a second-half brawl which marred the match but was quickly brought under control by police. However UEFA are likely to take a dim view of what could have been a far more serious situation which arose after a fence, segregating the fans, collapsed.

Four Olympians may face drug bans

LONDON (R) — Four Olympic athletes face drug bans if the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decides to retest their urine samples from the Atlanta Olympics.

IOC medical director Patrick Schamash said on Wednesday there had been four unannounced "positive results" from Atlanta for anabolic steroids.

But he said the IOC had not been satisfied about the reliability of the testing procedures conducted on the high resolution mass spectrometer, used for the first time at an Olympics in Atlanta.

"They were positive results," he said in a telephone interview from Lausanne. "Not positive cases. We are not 100 per cent sure that the tests were positive."

"We don't want to spoil the athletes' lives if we are not 100 per cent sure. We want to be very clear."

Schamash said a decision on whether or not to retest the athletes' samples would be made at a medical sub-committee meeting within the next two weeks.

He said he did not know the identity of the athletes or which sports were involved.

"We will decide whether to retest," he said. "There's no wish to hide something."

Bulgarian women's triple jumper Iva Prandzheva and Russian women's high hurdler Natalya Shekodonova tested positive for steroids in Atlanta on the standard mass spectrometer and were banned for four years.



Alberto Tomba

World Cup arrives in Utah minus Tomba

PARK CITY, Utah (R) — With its brightest star 8,000 miles away, the World Cup of Alpine skiing makes its 11th annual appearance on a race course that will host the Olympics in five years.

In one of the busiest race weekends of the season, both men and women will race giant slalom and slalom, beginning with a women's giant slalom Thursday.

Alberto Tomba of Italy, fresh from two gold medals at the World Championships last January, injured his knee and wrist in an October training mishap and isn't expected to compete until a December 17 slalom at Madonna di Campiglio, Italy.

The Park City spotlight will shift to Katja Seizinger of Germany, the defending overall women's champion who, again, has the early lead: Seizinger, increasingly

broadening her emphasis from the downhill event in which she is Olympic champion, won the season opening giant slalom October 27 on the glacier at Soelden, Austria.

Seizinger's expanding technical ability bodes ill for her opponents, since she has lost little in the speed events. Last season, the 24-year-old German won the season Super G title and was runnerup to American Picabo Street in downhill. Street, just recovered from foot surgery, hasn't trained sufficiently for technical events and won't race until the December 7-8 downhill and Super G at Vail, Colorado.

Deborah Compagnoni of Italy, runnerup at Soelden, again should be a top challenger, along with another German, Hilde Gerg, third in the opening race.

Lasse Kjus of Norway, defending men's champion,

will attempt to get back on track after a disastrous beginning. Third after the first run at Soelden, he fell on the second run of a race won by Switzerland's Steve Locher. Another Swiss, Michael Von Gruenigen, was second, with Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway third.

Racers arriving Tuesday encountered extremely warm weather at the Utah resort, with a predicted Wednesday high of 50 degrees Fahrenheit. However, snow conditions on the race course are excellent and a storm predicted for late Thursday is expected to drop temperatures and produce more snow.

The event — just the second time both men and women have opened the season together for four races — offers \$200,000 in prize money, with \$25,000 to the winner of each race.

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Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A 7 2
♥ A K Q 9
♦ A 8 5 4
♣ 9 7

EAST
♠ 10 9 4
♥ 7 6 5 3
♦ 10 3 2
♣ A K J

WEST
♠ 8 6 5 3
♥ J 2
♦ Q 7
♣ Q 10 8 5 2

SOUTH
♠ K Q J
♥ 7 6 4
♦ K 8 6
♣ A 6 4 3

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1NT Pass 2NT Pass
3NT Pass Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: First of ♠.

Follow the bidding and play of this hand, then decide who, if anyone, erred in either phase of the game.

Even employing free-card majors, we would be inclined to open the North hand with one heart. However, North-South were playing "old-fashioned" methods, so the auction was routine and no one can be faulted.

West led a low club to East's ♠A. Since declarer held the queen of diamonds, a solid heart lead would have led to a heart return from the 10 ♠ into dummy's Q ♠. Declarer, on the other hand, had a diamond in the suit to the king, declarer switched to hearts. The spades were cashed out, East letting go of the remaining low diamond. Declarer now exited with a diamond to East's ♠A, and a heart return from the 10 ♠ into dummy's Q ♠. Declarer, on the other hand, had a diamond in the suit to the king, declarer switched to hearts. The spades were cashed out, East letting go of the remaining low diamond. Declarer now exited with a diamond to East's ♠A, and a heart return from the 10 ♠ into dummy's Q ♠.

Belle becomes baseball's highest paid player

CHICAGO (R) — The Chicago White Sox have made slugger Albert Belle the highest-paid player in baseball history, signing him to a five-year contract estimated to be worth more than \$50 million.

The White Sox Tuesday said they have signed Belle, who led the majors with 98 homers and 274 RBI last two seasons, to a five-year contract with a one-year option.

White Sox owner and chairman Jerry Reinsdorf confirmed the contract makes Belle "the highest-paid player in baseball."

The signing is a surprise since it was believed the Florida Marlins had the best chance to lure Belle away from the Cleveland Indians. The Marlins offered Belle a four-year contract worth \$38 million, averaging out to \$9.5 mil-

lion per season.

"Money wasn't what it was all about, although this contract makes him the highest-paid player in baseball. He signed with us because he likes playing in Chicago and batting behind Frank Thomas."

"It was important for me to stay in the American league," said Belle, who was dressed in a White Sox jersey and cap at the news conference. "I like the way the organization is emphasizing a championship. Frank Thomas is a good friend of mine and I know he had some influence in getting me over here."

The Indians made Belle a five-year offer worth \$40 million last week in an effort to retain baseball's premier slugger.

"Without a doubt, we consider him one of the game's greatest hitters," said Ron Schueler, White Sox senior vice president of major league operations. "Frank Thomas and Albert Belle give our lineup two of the best run producers in the game today and could very well rank as one of the best 1-2 offensive punches in baseball history."

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	Philadelphia 1 QUICK & THE DEAD Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Philadelphia 2 Tom Cruise ... in MISSION IMPOSSIBLE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Sean Connery ... in THE ROCK (In Dolby stereo) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD "1" INDEPENDENCE DAY (In Dolby stereo) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45 CONCORD "2" BRAVEHEART Shows: 3:15, 6:00, 9:00	Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled Five-Star Government Starring comedians: Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubishat Play starts 8:30 p.m.	PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights At 8:30 p.m. Theatre is closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday For reservation please call 625155 - 640155

Ben Johnson wants to run again

TORONTO (R) — Sprinter Ben Johnson, banned for life in 1993 after a second positive drug test, said on Tuesday he wants to be reinstated so he can run again and prove he "still is the best sprinter" in the world.

"Well I just want to re-write the books, the history books, and prove that I am still the best sprinter that ever ran track and field. I want to go back on the international circuit," said Johnson in a pre-recorded interview broadcast on CBC newsworld's the National Sport Tuesday.

Johnson, who will be 35 in December, was suspended from competition for life by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) in 1993 after testing positive for an excessive amount of the male hormone testosterone at a grand prix track meet in Montreal on January 17, 1993. At the time Johnson denied he had used any banned drug but said he would not appeal the suspension because a legal challenge would be too expensive.

Johnson's manager Morris Chrobotek told CBC Newsworld that he and Johnson had spoken recently with track and field officials in Ottawa about a possible reinstatement.

"We have talked to two or three associations (about) having Mr. Ben Johnson reinstated and we'd like for them to speed things up and have him reinstated," Chrobotek said.

Chrobotek did not elaborate on what grounds a request for reinstatement would be based although he suggested there was a flaw in the testing procedure. Johnson had passed a drug test at a competition two days prior to the Montreal meet and passed another test four days after the Montreal event.

Officials at athletics Canada, the national governing body for track and field, could not be reached for comment late Tuesday.

Earlier Tuesday at a press conference in Toronto, Canada's Donovan Bailey and Michael Johnson of the U.S. announced they would meet in a 150-metre match race on May 31, 1997, with the winner to receive \$1.5-million and claim to the title of the world's fastest man.

Bailey set the world 100-metre record in winning the Olympic gold medal in Atlanta. Johnson won gold in the 200- and 400-metre events at the Atlanta Games — sparking immediate debate over which sprinter should be dubbed the world's fastest human. The city and venue for the Bailey-Michael Johnson showdown will be announced at a later date.

Asked to make a prediction on the outcome of the Bailey-Michael Johnson match-up, Ben Johnson said that Michael Johnson's speed and experience running the curves over the 200- and 400-metre distances would give him the edge.

"I know Michael Johnson and I know Donovan Bailey," Ben Johnson said. "Donovan Bailey is going to have trouble going around the curve because he's so tall. By the time his speed picks up, the race will be over. I predict Michael Johnson will win the 150."

Ben Johnson's first drug suspension came at the 1988 Seoul Olympics where he was stripped of his 100-metre gold medal and world record clocking of 9.79 seconds after he tested positive for a banned steroid, stanozolol.

The Seoul doping scandal prompted a Canadian inquiry into drug use in sport at which Johnson testified under oath that he had passed 29 drug tests between 1981 and 1988 even though he had used banned anabolic steroids in that time.

Olajuwon hospitalised following match

HOUSTON (R) — All-Star centre Hakeem Olajuwon was taken to a hospital with an irregular heartbeat on Tuesday, but the team said his condition was not serious.

Olajuwon had 10 points and five rebounds in the first half, when Houston opened a 71-48 lead. But at halftime he complained of "a little jumpiness in his chest," team spokesman Tim Frank said, and he was taken to the hospital where he will remain overnight for tests.

Houston, got 22 points and 17 rebounds from Charles Barkley in the 122-93 trouncing of the Minnesota Timberwolves for their ninth win in 10 games.

The 33-year-old Olajuwon is an 11-time All-Star who won the most valuable player award in 1994 and led the Rockets to consecutive NBA Championships in 1994 and 1995. He had clotting problems in the 1991-92 season and was treated with blood thinners. He also wore an elastic sleeve on his leg to improve circulation.

"I'm concerned about Hakeem's situation," Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "He had this condition a few years ago. It's a day-to-day deal and we can just hope for the best."

A team spokesman said Olajuwon underwent an EKG and will be kept overnight for further tests.

In Orlando, Patrick Ewing had 24 points, 16 rebounds and became the 23rd player in NBA history to score 20,000 points as the New York Knicks built a 25-point third-quarter lead before turning back the undermanned Orlando Magic, 92-88 in an Atlantic Division battle.

John Starks added 15 points and Charlie Ward 14 for New York, which led 65-40 with 4:31 to play in the third quarter after Charles Oakley made a 21-footer. Orlando rallied within 88-85 with 1:16 to play on a three-pointer by Nick Anderson.

Childs and Scott Brooks hit two free throws in the final 14 seconds to preserve the victory for the Knicks.

In Cleveland, Terrell Brandon scored 18 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers limited the Atlanta Hawks to just 26 points in the second half on the way to a 73-63 victory.

Christian Laetner had 16 points and nine rebounds for the Hawks.

In Denver, Alonzo Mourning scored 23 points and P.J. Brown added 18 and 11 rebounds as the Miami Heat used a big first-quarter run and never trailed thereafter in a 104-86 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

The Heat stopped a three-game losing streak.

"We had a rock-solid game," Miami coach Pat Riley said. "We had some real good runs and maintained a double digit lead. We shot that ball well and did not turn it over. That equalised the fact that we did not rebound well."

At Golden State, Nick Van Exel scored 27 points and Shaquille O'Neal added 26 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 112-109 victory over the Golden State Warriors for their third straight victory.

Eddie Jones added 16 points for the Lakers, who have won five of their last six games. Latrell Sprewell scored 33 points and Joe Smith had 19 for the Warriors.

In Portland, Arvydas Sabonis' basket with 20.7 seconds left in overtime lifted the Portland Trail Blazers to their third straight victory, a 92-90 win over the Sacramento Kings.

After Sacramento's Corliss Williamson hit a running hook to tie the game, 90-90, with 1:26 remaining in the extra session, the teams exchanged missed shots.

Sabonis broke the deadlock with a leaning hook in the paint. Sacramento's Mitch Richmond missed a fadeaway from the baseline at the buzzer.

In Milwaukee, Armon Gilliam and Johnny Newman each scored four of their 27 points in the final three minutes as the Milwaukee Bucks held off the Dallas Mavericks, 100-97, to snap a three-game losing streak.

Glenn Robinson added 16 points for the Bucks, who overcame the absence of frontcourt starters Vin Baker and Andrew Lang and remained unbeaten (4-0) at home.

In Toronto, Shawn Kemp scored 20 of his 26 points in the first half, when Seattle opened a 27-point lead, and the Supersonics held on for their eighth straight victory, 106-98 over the short-handed Toronto Raptors.

Gary Payton scored 24 points and Detlef Schrempf added 17 for the Supersonics, who took advantage of the absence of Raptors guard Damon Stoudamire and built a 61-34 lead just before the end of the first half.

Date delays retirement with victory over Seles

NEW YORK (R) — Kimiko Date celebrated her retirement Tuesday at Madison Square Garden but the 26-year-old Japanese still has more work to do at the \$2 million WTA Tour Chase Championships.

Date delayed her life-after-tennis by advancing to the quarterfinals when co-world number two Monica Seles was forced to quit their first-round match because of an injured shoulder.

But Date, who was leading 5-4 in the first set when Seles retired, was no party pooper and ceremonies were held on court as scheduled for Japan's greatest player.

World No.1 Steffi Graf beat Slovakia's Karina Habsudova 6-1, 6-4, in 48 minutes in her opening match. The victory sent Graf into a quarterfinal against world number eight Lindsay Davenport of the United States.

With Seles retiring in her opening match, Graf is all but certain to retain her top ranking at year's end, especially if she takes a fifth title at the season-ending event that matches the tour's top 16 players.

Date announced earlier this year that she was retiring at the end of the season — after spending her third year in the top 10.

The lithe Japanese manoeuvred her way into the upper echelon of the sport by learning to take the ball early and hit with topspin, by mastering the angles she needed to beat players with greater power and by being steadier than her foes.

Date splashed onto the big-time scene in August 1991 when she catapulted from 112th in the rankings to number 32 by upsetting then-number three Gabriela Sabatini in the semifinals in Los Angeles.

Since then, the 5-foot 4-inch (1.62 m) Date has established a list of firsts as a Japanese player.

Date, ranked as high and world number four, was the first Japanese to reach the Wimbledon semifinals (1996) and the French Open semifinals (1995).

In 1994 she became the first Japanese in 21 years to appear in a grand slam singles semifinals when she advanced to the final four at the Australian Open, a feat last achieved by



Monica Seles of the USA is attended to by a trainer during a break in her first round match against Kimiko Date of Japan at the Chase WTA Championships at New York's Madison Square Garden (Reuters photo)

Kazuko Sawamatsu at the 1973 Australian Open.

"I've got so many matches that I still remember," said Date, who has won seven tournament titles and made nearly \$2 million in winnings in her seven years on the tour.

"The first one is the Wimbledon that I played on the centre court," said Date, who stretched Steffi Graf to three exciting sets at the All England Club this summer.

"And also the Fed Cup in April this year," added Date, referring to a victory over Graf to help Japan defeat Germany in the women's team competition.

Of course, Date may give herself another great memory as she continues to play through the season-ending championships — next up is 16-year-old Swiss sensation Martina Hingis in the quarterfinals.

Worn down by the strain of competition, Date wants to start a new life, though she admits she doesn't have "anything special" planned.

Seles said she was sorry to see Date leave the Tour.

"I think it's such an early age to retire," said Seles, also thinking of the retirement of 26-year-old Sabatini, who was honoured here

Monday. "I think I can pretty sure speak for all the players that we will definitely miss her. She has been so nice all the time."

"She's just a really nice person. For me, it will be hard because I think that it will be very weird starting next year not seeing two players (Date and Sabatini) who we've had around for a long time."

Graf had bittersweet feelings about the early retirement of Date, who won two tournaments this year besides reaching the Wimbledon semifinals.

"She had the best year this year and I think she could have gone even further than she did," said Graf. "That's maybe the thing that is a little bit different from what I think about my approach to the sport. It's kind of sad that somebody has more potential than she's given a try for."

Date, however, is happy to be leaving the tennis grind behind.

"This is not the end, this is a new beginning for me," Date said in English during the on-court ceremony. "Once again, thank you everybody, and goodbye."

Sampras runs over Agassi in Hanover

HANOVER (AFP) — World No. 1 Pete Sampras crushed Andre Agassi 6-2, 6-1 in just 46 minutes on Wednesday to race off to a brilliant start at the ATP Tour World Championship.

Sampras, who will hold onto the computer top spot for the fourth consecutive year when the season ends Sunday, completely dominated Agassi, the number 7 who had complained of illness earlier this week.

Sampras dominated in all parts of the brief contest, hitting nine aces and 28 winners to keep up his attack against his rival.

Agassi didn't have a break point chance and committed 17 unforced errors in the Red Group contest.

Sampras has not lost Agassi since July 1995 and boasts a 12-8 record in the series.

Sampras, who won the U.S. Open for his only Grand Slam title of the year, has lost just 10 matches in 1996 while winning seven events.

Earlier current world number two Michael Chang's poor form continued here in the ATP World Championship as he lost in straight sets to Austria's Thomas Muster — his second successive defeat.

Muster, the 1995 French Open champion, beat Chang, the 1989 French Open title holder, 6-4, 6-3 to virtually end the Ameri-



Thomas Muster of Austria returns a ball to Michael Chang of the United States at the ATP World Championships in Hanover (Reuters photo)

can's hopes of qualifying for the semifinals from the round robin section.

Muster, who lost his first match on Tuesday to Goran Ivanisevic, eased through in 87 minutes as Chang, who lost to Boris Becker in last year's final, failed to come to terms with the powerful

Austrian's baseline game.

Muster required one break in each set to overcome Chang, who made 36 unforced errors, and will play Richard Krajicek in his final group match to see whether he makes the semi-finals.

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Haensch urges speedier talks, assails Israeli settlement plans

Europarlament chief addresses Palestinian council

RAMALLAH (Agencies) — The president of the European Parliament, Klaus Haensch, called on Palestinian legislators Wednesday to accelerate negotiations with Israel on implementing signed peace agreements.

Mr. Haensch also blasted Israeli plans to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. "Let me state clearly: New settlements are illegal and there must be no expansion," Mr. Haensch told the members of the Palestinian council at their meeting in Ramallah. "Bulldozers do not pave the way for peace."

The council rolled out a red carpet for Mr. Haensch and frequently interrupted his speech with applause.

Mr. Haensch expressed support for Palestinian statehood, but said Palestinians must be patient with the faltering peace talks with Israel.

"We know that the peace process has not yet met your aspirations," he said. "The people you represent must be convinced that patient negotiation will bring its own rewards."

Mr. Haensch told the legislators he shared their concern that "the continuing lack of progress in the talks and the negotiations on Hebron ... will lead back to suspicion, distrust and confrontation."

The European Parliament is the general assembly of the 15-nation European Union (EU). Mr. Haensch, only the second high-rank-



European Parliament President Klaus Haensch on Wednesday addresses the Palestinian legislative council in Ramallah in the West Bank (Reuters photo)

Israeli official to address the council since its inauguration in March, told Palestinian lawmakers the EU would cooperate with the United States to try to ensure that peace talks run smoothly.

"The idea that a pro-Palestinian European Union should balance out a pro-

gence to building a country of prosperity, justice and dignity. A state, yes a state, respected by all because it respects all."

The EU is the main source of financial support for the Palestinian autonomy government, providing more than \$700 million in aid since 1993.

In his welcoming speech, Palestinian Council Speaker Ahmad Qureia praised "the honest efforts of the European Union to present the collapse of the peace process, which is on the verge of disaster due to the Israeli delay in implementing the agreements."

Mr. Haensch referred to the slow pace of the talks, saying, "the negotiations must not only continue, but be accelerated."

He also said that while Palestinians can expect Israel to fulfil its obligations under Oslo, they must also meet their commitments. "You have a list of complaints about the implementation of Oslo ... but the Israelis also have theirs," he said.

"The people you represent must be convinced that patient negotiation will bring its own rewards," he said.

After his meetings in Ramallah, Mr. Haensch visited Hebron for talks with local Palestinian officials and was due to meet Mr. Arafat Thursday in Gaza City.

UNHCR freezes its programme in Kabul

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United Nations refugee agency has frozen its programmes for refugees in the war-shattered Afghan capital of Kabul after armed Taliban soldiers invaded the home of an international staff worker, arrested four local employees and ordered their female staff off the job, an official said Wednesday.

"I think we're saying we simply can't go on like this," said Rupert Coleville, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in neighbouring Pakistan.

The UNHCR operates about a dozen different programmes in Kabul.

It provides building material, quilts and food to the city's neediest, like widows, children and the impoverished.

It offers community assistance programmes to Kabul's ruined neighbourhoods, helping war-weary residents rebuild their shattered lives.

The job is a big one in Kabul where four years of bitter

factional fighting among factions, who threw out the communists from power, has left 70 per cent of the city in ruins. But the Taliban, who swept into Kabul in September, has made it virtually impossible for the UNHCR to operate, said Mr. Coleville.

Last Oct. 26, a UNHCR driver was picked up by Taliban soldiers and has not been heard from since, he said.

On Nov. 12 three more Afghan workers for the UNHCR were taken by armed Taliban men as they left the office. They too have not been heard from since.

On the same night 16 armed Taliban soldiers invaded the home of the UNHCR's international worker, remained inside for five hours and "issued various threats before eventually leaving in the early hours of the morning," said Mr. Coleville.

Taliban leaders earlier promised to allow some women to return to work in medical fields, but days later Taliban soldiers threatened to hang women found working.

Iranians threaten Germans with 'Rushdie-style' fatwa

QOM (AFP) — Shiite Muslim clerics in this holy Iranian city threatened

German prosecutors Wednesday with a "Rushdie-style" death sentence if they do not retract their charges of terrorism against Iranian leaders.

The threat was made during a rally by several thousand clerics and religious students from seminaries in Qom in central Iran.

"We find this insult to be in the same category as the Satanic Verses," the protesters said, referring to the controversial British novel which earned its author Salman Rushdie a death sentence in a "fatwa," or religious decree, issued in 1989 by Iran's late leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"The mercenary prosecutors should be given the maximum punishment for this treason and crime," they said in a final resolution.

"We will sentence the fascist, dirty prosecutors to the same doom as Rushdie if they do not apologise for their satanic move," chanted the angry demonstrators, who also included Qom's governor general and two members of parliament from the province.

German federal prosecutors have accused Iranian leaders, including spiritual and political guide Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, of approving the 1992 murder of four Iranian Kurdish opposition figures in a Berlin restaurant.

'Iran kidnapped writer'

An Iranian writer missing for two weeks was abducted by agents from Tehran who are using torture to get him to denounce colleagues as anti-government agitators, former Iranian President Abdol Hassan Bani-Sadr charged Wednesday.

The writer, Faraj Sarkoui, was due to take a plane from Tehran to Frankfurt on Nov. 4 to visit his family in Germany.

German legislators say he never arrived and they have written to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani about the case.

Mr. Bani-Sadr, who has lived in exile in France since fleeing Iran in 1981, said Mr. Sarkoui was abducted at Tehran airport and is being kept in prison by the security and information ministry.

Mr. Sarkoui "is being kept in solitary confinement and tortured because the Iranian secret service want to force him to say Iranian writers are acting against the Iranian regime with encouragement from Germany," Mr. Bani-Sadr said in a statement.

The German deputies who reported the writer missing say that in 1994 he and 133 other writers sent an open letter to the Tehran government urging it to respect freedom of expression and human rights.

Mr. Bani-Sadr said "there is a link between this request and the kidnapping of the Iranian writer."

Libya invites qualified Arabs as immigrants

CAIRO (R) — After expelling tens of thousands of Sudanese and

Palestinians over the past 18 months, Libya on Wednesday invited qualified Arabs of all nationalities to apply to settle in the country permanently.

In a paid advertisement in the Egyptian government newspaper Al Gomhuria, it said Arabs wanting to settle or invest in Libya could apply to Libyan embassies with immediate effect with details of their qualifications or skills.

"All you need to do is fill in a form at the Libyan embassy and produce two photos," said Mohammad Sadeq of the information department of the Libyan embassy in Cairo.

"We are not seeking a specific number of immigrants," Mr. Sadeq told Reuters. The advertisement is appearing in other newspapers in other Arab countries and the invitation is valid until the end of the year, he added.

Mr. Sadeq gave no explanation for the immigration campaign, which appeared to run counter to the Libyan government's sporadic attempts to force non-Libyans out of the country, which has a population of around five million.

Diplomats in Tripoli say the main motive behind the campaigns against illegal immigrants is to save the foreign currency Libya spends on paying them.

But the advertisement noted that under a law

Arab League plans to revive Jerusalem Centre

CAIRO (Agencies) — The Arab League announced Wednesday it is reviving the Jerusalem Centre, an organisation aimed at protecting Islamic religious and historical sites in the city and opposing Israeli expansion of Jewish influences.

Saeed Kamal, Arab League vice president for Palestinian affairs, told a news conference Wednesday that the league is also organising a year-long international campaign to collect money for restoration projects in Jerusalem.

The Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, while Israel has said it would never relinquish control over the sector.

The Jerusalem Centre was created in 1982 but has been dormant for several years. It was first made up of the Palestinians, Jordan and the Arab League but now includes Egypt, Syria, Morocco, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) and UNESCO, the U.N.'s cultural arm. It will be headed by Arab League Secretary General Esmat Meguid.

"The Jerusalem Centre has a technical aim with a long-term political dimension," Mr. Kamal said.

"The Holy City continues its struggle with the (Israeli) occupation in a situation that deteriorates daily, especially under the pre-

sent Israeli government, which is making the city more Judaic and robbing it of its Arab and Islamic identity."

Kaddoumi: Summit necessary

A senior Palestinian official said an Arab summit will be necessary next year to discuss the impasse in the Arab-Israeli peace process, in statements published on Wednesday.

"There is no need for an Arab summit now but circumstances will impose one next year," said Farouq Kaddoumi, head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's political department.

Mr. Kaddoumi, in an interview with the Egyptian government weekly Al Mussawar, also called for a meeting soon of the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestine National Authority.

The last Arab summit in Cairo in June warned Israel that Arab countries could freeze the normalisation of ties with the Jewish state if it failed to make progress in the peace process.

Mr. Kaddoumi also called on U.S. President Bill Clinton to put pressure on Israel to push forward the peace process, warning that the lack of progress could force Palestinians to resort to violence.

Israeli spokesman slams U.S. stance on settlement

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday Israel would continue to expand existing Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank despite U.S. objections.

"I am sure the Americans will understand...the natural population growth and expansion of the settlements are inevitabilities to which they cannot object," David Bar-Ilan, Mr. Netanyahu's communications director, told Israel Radio.

Mr. Bar-Ilan was commenting on U.S. reaction to reports that Israel plans to expand the settlement of Emmanuel in the West Bank.

State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said on Tuesday that Washington was looking into the reports, "but our standpoint on this type of activity is clear that such settlement work, or new settlement work, is not at all helpful to the negotiating process."

Calling Davies' statement "puzzling," Mr. Bar-Ilan said the United States "did not object to the expansion, by almost 50 per cent, of settlements" under Israel's previous Labour-led government.

The Labour government imposed a settlement freeze in 1992 but natural population growth and occupation of housing begun by the Likud administration boosted the number of settlers to more than 140,000 in the West Bank and Gaza, where two million Palestinians live.

"Mr. Netanyahu spoke about this with President (Bill) Clinton...I do not know why there was this (State Department) announcement but we will get on with our lives in Judea and Samaria," Mr. Bar-Ilan said, referring to the West Bank.

"It is impossible to order people not to

procreate or not to move to these communities. And that is how we will continue," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing government lifted the settlement freeze last August. Palestinians view the settlements as obstacles to the creation of an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza.

Although the Netanyahu government has yet to announce the establishment of new settlements, it has disclosed plans for the construction of thousands of housing units in existing ones.

Egyptian condemnation

Egypt on Wednesday condemned Israel's plan to build 1,800 settlement units near the West Bank city of Ramallah, calling it a dangerous setback for the peace process.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that since the issue of settlements will be dealt with in the final status negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel, the Jewish state is obliged not to build new settlements in the meantime.

"The Israeli settlement policy is a flagrant violation of legitimate international resolutions and the spirit of agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians and we consider this a dangerous setback to its commitment to peace," it said.

The Israeli government recently approved the building of 1,800 settlement units near Ramallah.

"We hope the Israeli government reconsiders its position on settlements and works on making real progress in the peace process ... and not to take any measures which will stall the process and increase tensions in the region," the Egyptian statement said.

Hamas holds Nablus rally

NABLUS (AFP) —

Thousands of activists, some of them masked and brandishing rifles, rallied in Nablus Wednesday to commemorate militants killed fighting Israel and reaffirm their opposition to peace accords with the Jewish state.

The rally on the Al Najah University campus in this Palestinian-controlled city was organised by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the main opposition to Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the target of a vast crackdown by Israeli authorities.

Some 4,000 people, mostly students, attended the demonstration, including hundreds of veiled women and a handful of hooded Hamas militants carrying Kalashnikov assault rifles.

Organisers said the rally was held in celebration of Palestinian and Islamic "martyrs," including Izzeddine Al Qassem, who was killed battling Zionist guerrillas near Nablus in November 1935. The armed wing of Hamas is named the Izzeddine Al Qassem Brigades.

Banners and signs carried by the crowd also commemorated the deaths of Hamas activists and 70 Palestinians killed in clashes with Israeli troops in September.

U.S. Senator Specter shuttles between Netanyahu and Assad

Syrian official says all means are open to regain Golan if talks fail

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — U.S. Senator Arlen Specter Wednesday shuttled between Israel and Syria in an apparent effort to revive stalled peace talks between the two countries as a senior Syrian official said Damascus would use any means to take back its Golan Heights from Israel, if peace talks failed to yield results.

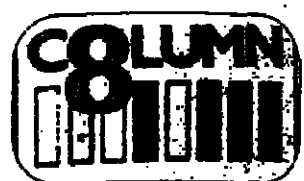
"If the peace process were to fail, Syria will not accept that its lands remain under occupation, it will act to liberate them in a manner which it deems appropriate and it is prepared to use any methods to do so," said Tawfiq Sallia, a member of the regional leadership of the Baath Party.

Syria is working to bring about a global peace and is working with great determination to liberate land and reclaim all Arab rights," he told the opening of the eighth congress of the Syrian Communist Party.

Syria is demanding the return of the Golan, seized by Israel in 1967 and "annexed" in 1981, as the cornerstone of any peace deal with the Jewish state.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won May elections on a platform promising never to give up the Golan, and tension between the two countries has been high since Mr. Netanyahu took office.

Mr. Specter met Wednesday morning with Mr. Netanyahu before flying to Damascus to meet with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. U.S. embassy spokesman Richard Scorza said.



Time is money for Hong Kong's busy Li

HONG KONG (AFP) —

One of the world's wealthiest men, tycoon Li Ka-Shing, was to return to a Hong Kong court Wednesday to testify over a disputed inheritance, despite calling for proceedings to be speeded up because he is a busy man. Adrienne Marsh Lefkowitz is fighting in the high court for a share of her father's estate which she claims was held in trust for her by the billionaire. After testifying Tuesday and hearing he would have to return to court the following day, Mr. Li was clearly irritated, the press reported Wednesday. "Can you try to be quicker?" he asked Ms. Lefkowitz lawyer. "I'm very, very busy." The court heard that Ms. Lefkowitz' father Nicholas Marsh died in 1988 in New York, leaving an estate worth 15 million Hong Kong dollars (\$1.9 million), the south China Morning Post said. Mr. Li, who was a friend and former business associate of Marsh, told the court he had been instructed to use his own judgement in disbursing the money. But Ms. Lefkowitz said the money was held in trust for her, adding that Mr. Li failed to even tell her about her father's finances until 1991. Mr. Li denies the claim.

Duchess of York jokes with Letterman

NEW YORK (AP) — The Duchess of York, who has complained of rough treatment from the British media, told TV talk show host David Letterman that she can let her hair down in the United States. "I guess you sort of give me a second chance over here. ... I suppose you cut a chick a bit of flak," the former Sarah Ferguson said Monday on CBS' "Late Show" with David Letterman. Fergie, 37, said she can travel in America "without people saying, 'she's too fat, she's thin, her skirt's too short, too long.'"

The duchess, who was divorced from Prince Andrew in May, began a U.S. tour last week to promote her autobiography, "My Story." Fergie said she spent her childhood "tying up the farm boys' legs and making them run through the mud," maturing very late when she was already on the public stage. Saying all the jokes she knew were too "filthy" for television, Fergie told Mr. Letterman one from her daughter, Princess Eugenie. "Why does the giraffe have a long neck? Because it has smelly feet," she said with a grin.

'Evita' promoters want to turn movie into fashion

WASHINGTON (AFP) — More than 40 years after her death, Eva Peron is about to spring back to life thanks to the efforts of two sales wizards — Madonna and Walt Disney. When Disney's "Evita" opens in a few weeks, starting one of the entertainment industry's best self-promotions, the selling of Argentina's legendary political figure will be an intense but strictly high-class affair. Forget about the plastic drinking cups, T-shirts, action figures and lunchboxes that follow the release of a typical Hollywood blockbuster. Instead, the chic Bloomingdale's department store will be opening "Evita" boutiques stocked with movie-inspired jewelry, makeup, dresses and platform shoes. Estee Lauder is jumping in with a line of 25 Evita cosmetic products, and renowned designers such as Salvatore Ferragamo and Victor Costa are creating Evita clothes, jewelry, scarves and gloves — some of which already have appeared, along with Madonna, on the covers of Vanity Fair and Vogue magazines. "They wanted none of the obvious ties to fast-food chains and cheap souvenir items," an "Evita" distributor told the Washington Post recently.

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